

Schools Resources on the Contribution of Refugees to Society

21 FEBRUARY 2006

Research report produced by the Development Education Association

Consumer Strategy: putting the public first

Summary of Report and Recommendations:

- It is important that discussions on the contribution of refugees and their practice within education are framed within a global dimension.
- Teachers and schools need to be encouraged to make connections between support to refugee children in their school and the wider curriculum of the school.
- Publications that demonstrate refugees' contribution to a local community are very popular and should be encouraged.
- The perspectives of refugee communities about the UK and the wider world need to be given space within schools.
- Many schools and teachers are likely to welcome increased advice and support on how to positively address the contribution of refugees.
- Every Child Matters raises major new opportunities for framing the development of this work.
- Refugee communities need to be encouraged and supported to play a positive role in the life of a school.
- New resources need to be considered within a broader strategy and it should be recognised that there are different needs and priorities depending on the location of the school, expertise of the staff and needs of the pupils.
- Strategic co-ordination needs to have a higher priority and include reference to the global dimension and wider range of stakeholders.
- Department for Constitutional Affairs can play an important role in these agendas because of its focus on human rights, social justice and political democracy. However for the Department to play a leading role there needs to be increased recognition that any programmes need to be linked to wider debates in society about how refugees are perceived.

1.0 Introduction

The Department for Constitutional Affairs has contracted the Development Education Association (DEA) to:

- ascertain the specific focus and need for resources for schools that address the contribution of refugees to UK society.
- identify examples of practice by refugee focused organisations and other bodies that demonstrate their contribution to social and political engagement in UK society which can be promoted within schools.

This report is based on evidence gathered by DEA staff of existing resources, which relate to refugees and examples of practice on the engagement of refugee communities with work with schools.

The research has focused on making connections between resources about refugees and asylum and wider political and social agendas. It has not attempted to summarise or review the wealth of material and examples of practice across the country in support of refugees within education and schools. Nor has the research looked in any detail at the work of the key refugee support initiatives and organisations.

Since the DEA began work on this research the Home Office launched its website on working with refugee children, www.nrif.org.uk which could potentially play a role in some of the proposals mentioned at the end of this report. The main focus of this website is on support to refugees within schools. The site has come out of the work of the National Refugee Integration Forum with close links to DfES and the government strategy on Every Child Matters.

In taking forward the framework agreed with DCA, the DEA identified that in order to make connections to wider issues around political engagement and democracy, the work of a considerable number of its members was particularly relevant. This in practice means locating an understanding of refugee and asylum issues and perspectives within a global dimension.

The 'global dimension' is a term now well respected by national educational policy-makers, based on the framework developed by DfES, DFID, QCA and the DEA. The DfES recommended action booklet, '**Developing the global dimension in the school curriculum**' states:

'The global dimension incorporates the key concepts of global citizenship, conflict resolution, diversity, human rights, interdependence, social justice, sustainable development and values and perceptions. It explores the interconnections between the local and the global. It builds knowledge and understanding, as well as developing skills and attitudes.'

The Global Dimension

Global Citizenship - Gaining the knowledge, skills and understanding of concepts and institutions necessary to become informed, active and responsible citizens.

Conflict resolution - Understanding the nature of conflicts, their impact on development and why there is a need for their resolution and the promotion of learning.

Social justice - Understanding the importance of social justice as an element in both sustainable development and the improved welfare of all people.

Values and perceptions - Developing a critical evaluation of representations of global issues and an appreciation of the effect these have on people's attitudes and values

Sustainable development - Understanding the need to maintain and improve the quality of life now without damaging the planet for future generations.

Interdependence - Understanding how people, places, economies and environments are all inextricably interrelated, and that choices and events have repercussions on a global scale.

Human rights - Knowing about human rights including the UN Convention on the Rights of the child

Diversity - Understanding and respecting difference and relating these to our common humanity

DfES, DFID, DEA, QCA and British Council- Developing the Global Dimension in the School Curriculum (2005)

2.0 Refugees and the School Curriculum

Themes relating to refugees appear implicitly and explicitly within both the primary and secondary **curricula**¹ across the UK. For example, in England, 'migration' is a focus in Geography and clear opportunities are presented by the Citizenship Programme of Study at Key Stage 3, this includes: 'the legal and human rights and responsibilities underpinning society'; 'the diversity of national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the UK and the need for mutual respect and understanding'; 'the world as a global community' and other relevant areas. All curriculum subjects can provide an opportunity to teach about refugees and refugee related matters.

The **National Curriculum for England's** aims are: *'The school curriculum should contribute to the development of pupils' sense of identity through knowledge and understanding of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural heritages of Britain's diverse society and of the local, national, European, Commonwealth and global dimensions of their lives.'* It also mentions that the school curriculum... *'should develop their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of their own and different beliefs and cultures, and how these influence individuals and societies. The school curriculum should pass on enduring values, develop pupils' integrity and autonomy and help them to be responsible and caring citizens capable of contributing to the development of a just society. It should promote equal opportunities and enable pupils to challenge discrimination and stereotyping...'*

The **National Curriculum Inclusion Statement** says that schools have a responsibility to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils. Teachers are required to have due regard to any gaps in pupils' learning resulting from missed or interrupted schooling (for example, that may be experienced by travellers, refugees) and diverse learning needs. Teachers, it states, need to be aware that pupils bring to school different experiences, interests and strengths which will influence the way in which they learn. This provides an appropriate framework for teaching for and about refugees.

One of the duties placed upon schools by the **Race Relations Amendment Act (RRAA) 2000** is to promote good relations between persons of different racial groups. It places a duty on schools to work towards the elimination of unlawful racial discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity.

The **Every Child Matters** agenda signals a cultural shift in the education system. Every Child Matters is intended to have five outcomes for children: Being healthy; Staying safe; Enjoying and achieving; Making a positive contribution; Economic well-being. It is clear that this agenda is becoming of key strategic importance for the needs and agendas of refugee communities.

¹ www.nc.uk.net provides the National Curriculum for England and links to those of Scotland, Wales and N Ireland

3.0 Refugees, Teachers and UK Society

Any educational material produced for schools needs to consider and address public and media perceptions of refugees. Negative images of refugees have had greater prominence since the events of September 2001 and it is therefore important that initiatives like Refugee Week are recognised as important programmes within schools. However in some schools events held during such weeks can all too often be a reproduction of traditional stereotypes of communities that can do more harm than good.

As Jill Rutter has demonstrated in her publications any discourse on refugees cannot ignore how they are seen within schools.² Addressing bullying and racism must be part of the educational response. This relates to social exclusion where children from communities who are perceived to be 'different' because of language or dress code are particularly targeted.

Jill's research also identified that if a school is to address refugee issues effectively, it takes time and cannot be dealt within a one off lesson. This means cross-curricular initiatives that make connections between subjects such as citizenship, history, geography and the arts.

In her resource, *Refugees: we left because we had to*, Jill raises the important point that many teachers may be wary of tackling refugee issues as they are controversial and require a lot of knowledge to understand them. She states 'teachers may assume that they must solve or at least confront the problems in advance of presenting them to children. This is not easy when issues are contestable and when different opinions can be put forward by different sides. Because of these difficulties, some teachers may ignore controversial issues such as refugees completely'.³

Whilst the wider issues around professional support to teachers have been outside of the scope of this research, an area that potentially needs further work is the relationship between any materials produced and how and where they are used within schools. Other work undertaken by DEA members, particularly the regional global dimension support strategies, have identified the importance of local support for teachers to tackle controversial and complex issues.

4.0 Literature Review

4.1 Lists of Resources

To ascertain the need for a resource on refugees for schools, it is necessary first of all to review the current material available. The main framework used to identify current resources that relate to the aims of this research has been the Global Dimension website <http://www.globaldimension.org.uk> a database of resources related to the global dimension to the school curriculum. A search on this site identified that the literature available to schools about the global dimension to refugee issues is extensive. There are over 130 teaching resources, which refer to, or focus on, teaching about refugees and asylum on this website. A list of these resources can be found by choosing the theme 'Refugees / Asylum' from the drop down list of themes.

Resources for teaching about refugees fall into two general categories:

- materials for teaching refugee pupils
- materials for teaching about refugee issues.

² Rutter, J, (2003) Refugee Children in 21st Century Britain, with Jones, C, (2001) Refugee Education: Mapping the Field, all Trentham Books, (2003)

³ Rutter, J (2004) Refugees: We left because we had to- a teaching resource for 11-18 year olds. Refugee Council.

4.2 Materials for teaching refugee pupils in schools

There is a wide range of material available to teachers to help them teach refugee children, however there are not many resources which make connections between their needs in the UK and an understanding of global issues. There are many storybooks for example which are available in dual languages (English plus another language), which can be used to support children's language learning. Publishers such as Mantra Lingua and Milet specialise in dual language publications.

On the global dimension website only nine key resources were identified in this area which make a connection to the global dimension. They were, however, of high quality. An example is Save the Children's *Home from Home* which includes ideas for inclusion and welcoming refugee children; activity ideas; how to involve parents; and information about organisations that can help with wider issues such as housing, health and legal advice.

Many local authorities, race equality bodies and refugee organisations produce directories of resources and contact points to support teaching refugee children in schools. An increasingly important number of authorities have resources, books and exhibitions which demonstrate from a historical perspective the contribution of specific refugee communities to a town, city or county. *Long Journey Home*, for example, is a regional initiative seeking to support and celebrate the contributions made by the many ethnic groups that have settled in the East Midlands since World War II.

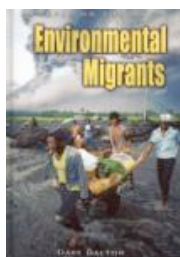
The Museum of Immigration and Diversity in Spitalfields in East London is an example of increased interest in the contribution of refugee communities to UK society and is available for educational groups to visit.

4.2.1 Materials for teaching about refugee matters and asylum in schools

There are a large number of teaching materials about refugee issues available for all school-based teaching age groups (early years, Key Stages 1 to 4 and post 16), although Key Stages 2 and 3 are particularly well resourced. There are more generic resources available, such as books about globalisation, or locality packs, which include a refugee strand, than resources that focus solely on the issue of refugees. Over 60 publications that specifically focus on refugee issues are highlighted on the Global Dimension database. Most of the resources are books, with background information and activity ideas for teachers. There are also a small number of resources which include a video, with testimonies or interviews from refugees, such as Team Video's *Why Refugees?* and Save the Children's *I am Here*.

Although there are many publishers who produce resources in this area, there are three key organisations with years of experience in developing education materials: the Refugee Council, Save the Children and Trentham Books. The Refugee Council and Save the Children has experience in writing manuals and activities for teachers, whereas Trentham Books has greater experience of writing policy and whole school planning materials. There are many resources for teaching about refugee issues that also include the themes of human rights and social justice. There are also resources that include the theme of democracy, although these are less common. The three themes human rights, social justice and democracy can also be searched for on the Global Dimension database.

Case Study: People on the Move – Refugees and Asylum Seekers



Background

Some commercial publishers have begun to produce books about refugee themes, although these resources are still less common than those produced by NGOs. Last year the commercial publisher Heinemann produced a series called 'People on the Move', written by a former Oxfam staff member.

This series of four hardback books looks at the issue of human migration in detail. The books would be suitable for a school library or for Geography teaching at lower secondary level. The four titles are: *Environmental Migrants*; *Refugees and Asylum Seekers*; *Economic Migrants* and *Nomads and Travellers*

Case Study: Credit to the Nation; Refugee Contributions to the UK



Background

The Refugee Council is perhaps the most widely known publisher of refugee resources for schools. Its publications cover a variety of formats, including dual language storybooks, teaching handbooks, activity ideas, and background reading. *Credit to the Nation* falls into the latter category, collating material from various sources. This book focuses on the contribution refugees have made to UK society - economically, socially and culturally. The book gives background information about the benefits of migration, along with several case studies, such as Basque refugee children fleeing from fascism in the 1930s, and Jewish refugees fleeing Nazis in the

1930s and '40s. There are also more contemporary examples of individual migration, such as from Chile and Uganda. Each example is a one or two page summary, which would make interesting source material for secondary English or History teaching. There are also short interviews with refugees living in the UK today.

Case Study: Eye to Eye Website



Background

Many large international NGOs have produced publications for teaching refugee issues in schools. Save the Children has years of experience in this field, producing resources in a number of different formats based on its development work overseas. The Eye to Eye website is an example of a project which combines both overseas development and UK-focused development awareness components with guidance for teachers, primary and secondary classroom activities and a useful section on further resources and support. The political and moral issues surrounding the current crisis in the Middle East are tackled and opportunities are provided for students to

explore the experiences of children living in refugee camps in Palestine.

Case Study: Moving Here – The Refugee Experience

Background



The DEA membership includes a network of Development Education Centres, working locally with schools, and youth and adult groups throughout the UK. The Development Education Centre in South Yorkshire worked with the Council's Ethnic Minority Achievement Service and a number of other organisations to produce an interactive exhibition about refugees and asylum seekers, and accompanying materials. The 'Moving Here' book contains activities for Citizenship and PSHE lessons for primary and secondary audiences, developed in conjunction with the 'Moving Here' exhibition. The activities explore issues around prejudice, rights, and exclusion, which lead into more detailed activities that build understanding and

empathy for refugees and asylum seekers. The book is a practical guide with lesson plans, and plenty of materials that can be photocopied for use in the classroom.

5.0 DEA members and work related to refugees and asylum seekers

The DEA membership contains a range of locally, regionally and nationally based organisations. Many DEA members work on issues related to refugees and asylum seekers, including work with schools and teachers. This can include providing support and services to refugees and asylum seekers, promoting awareness about refugees and asylum seeker issues, organising activities for Refugee Week, and assisting teachers and pupils to explore related issues via resources, exhibitions, videos, training and speakers.

DEA member organisations working in this area include national voluntary sector organisations, international development NGOs and locally and community based organisations. DEA membership includes organisations run by and for refugees and asylum seekers and organisations working in partnership with refugees and asylum seekers. Below are some examples of work from a selection of national organisations, community groups and Development Education Centres who are all DEA members.

a. National organisations

Amnesty UK provides resources for teachers on refugee issues as part of its human rights education work. Over 1,000 schools did the Refugee Voices Assembly, as part of Amnesty International's Protect the Human week in 2005. The assembly focuses on refugees and asylum seekers from across the world – one of Amnesty's key areas of work.

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

The British Red Cross supplies teachers and other educators with materials designed to help them with personal and social education and citizenship. This includes regionally based initiatives such as the West Midlands Youth and Schools Service of the British Red Cross work on peer-befriending, raising awareness about refugees and promoting young people's participation in Birmingham schools.

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

Minorities of Europe work in Coventry but their work extends to national and European work with young people on global citizenship and community cohesion. It also includes refugee and asylum seeker support and a project on registering to vote.

<http://www.moe-online.com/>

Reconnect is a UK-based NGO that works to relieve need, hardship and distress in developing countries principally but not exclusively by facilitating the employment in such countries of persons living as refugees or displaced persons in developed countries. Reconnect is also engaged in raising awareness among the public on the underlying causes/impacts of global displacement and 'brain drain'. Reconnect is currently working with Birkbeck College, University of London, on a teacher training programme for graduate refugees.

Info@reconnectonline.org.uk

The Refugee Council is the largest organisation in the UK working with asylum seekers and refugees. Its services include producing publications and authoritative information on refugee issues, campaigning and lobbying for refugees' voices to be heard and giving advice and support, capacity building, residential and care provision and training. The Council publicises a range of resources for teachers: to teach about refugee issues, support and teach refugee children and bilingual teaching resources. <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/>

As part of **Refugee Week**, '**Global Communities**' is a three-year education project funded by the Department for International Development. It has been created to raise awareness of refugee issues within a global context amongst school children in the UK. Primary and secondary education packs have been produced with the support of a number of schools and NGOs, including DEA member organisations. <http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk/>

Save the Children's work on refugee and asylum seeker issues is extensive and includes a Refugee Week schools project in Scotland; activities produced by young people; and guides for school assemblies, youth groups and adults working with young refugees and asylum seekers.

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

STAR (Student Action for Refugees) is a network of university based student groups and young people around the UK. STAR members promote awareness of refugee issues, support refugees in the local and international community and campaign for the rights of refugees. Members have the opportunity to get directly involved in practical projects through volunteering with refugees and asylum seekers. They learn more about refugee issues, build on their skills and gain a great deal from the people they work with as well as providing local support.

<http://www.star-network.org.uk/>

b. Community Organisations

Balik Arts is an arts and education organisation working mainly with Turkish, Kurdish and Turkish Cypriot communities in London. Activities include after-school and weekend clubs, most users come from refugee and asylum seeking families. balikarts@btconnect.com

GHWEG provide advice, employment training, vocational guidance and counselling targeted at Black and minority ethnic communities. They run development activities to encourage proactive actions by Black and minority ethnic communities to intervene in poverty alleviation and awareness creation among migrants. gharweg@aol.com

The Refugee Women's Training and Promotion Association provides training to Sudanese, Eritrean, Ethiopian, Ugandan, Bangladeshi and other refugees who have had limited access to education. teresa.ibrahim@btinternet.com

The Somali Advisory Bureau works with refugees from the Horn of Africa. It conducts workshops and networks on development issues with many organisations. It also provides basic skills training, advice and information and guidance.

somaliadvisorybureau@care4free.net

The South Sudanese Community Association is a community based organisation providing a range of services to refugees from Southern Sudan and people in Southern Sudan in terms of education, health and social services. sscamember@aol.com

c. Development Education Centres and networks

The Development Education Centre in Dorset provides advice, information, support, training and bursaries to Black and minority ethnic, refugee, asylum-seeking and traveller children and their families in Poole schools to raise aspirations and help them reach their full potential.

<http://globaldimensionsouthwest.org.uk>

The Development Education Centre (South Yorkshire) recently worked in partnership with Global Link, Sheffield City Council's Ethnic Minority Achievement Service, the Northern Refugee Centre, Sheffield Racial Equality Council and a number of other partners on an exhibition-based project called Moving Here: The Refugee Experience. A teaching activity pack was also produced.

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

East Midlands Network for Global Perspectives in Schools worked with teachers in Leicestershire/Leicester City to raise understanding of refugee and asylum seekers. This included working with Refugee Action in Leicester. Teachers identified Refugee Week as a focus for a twilight In-Service Education and Training (INSET) session. This will be complemented by a collaboration with an arts organisation in Leicester, who are developing a storytelling programme for schools involving refugees and asylum seekers. http://www.skillshare.org/skillshare_uk.htm

Global Connections worked with Cardigan-based Small World Theatre and refugee mentors on a drama-based project running in Swansea schools from 2002 to 2004 focussing on encouraging host communities to support refugees and asylum seekers. Following a performance by Small World Theatre, pupils took part in a classroom-based children's rights workshop with Global Connections, then spent five weeks exploring issues around both their own lives and those of refugees and asylum seekers, through the medium of drama with Small World Theatre and the refugee mentor. The project culminated in a performance by the pupils to the local community. The end of the project saw a series of in-service teacher sessions carried out in some of the schools who had taken part. <http://www.globalconnections.org.uk>

Global Link (Lancaster) works principally with pupils, trainee teachers and teachers in Lancaster and district to develop understanding of, and commitment to, global citizenship. Their work includes the co-ordination of Escape to Safety and Fortress Europe, interactive multi-media exhibitions that explore issues of refugees and asylum-seeking, and which are available nationally. <http://www.globalink.org.uk>

The Humanities Education Centre promotes the concept of global citizenship both locally and globally. The Centre works in London and the South East to raise awareness of the causes and consequences of inequality, promote sustainable development and celebrate cultural diversity. Work on refugees and asylum seekers includes projects with overseas partners and support and information for the local authority refugee action plan. <http://www.citizenship-pieces.org.uk/>

London Development Education Centre is an educational centre with an anti-racist and anti-sexist programme of action. It works towards raising discussion on policy and issues affecting young people in schools and produce materials highlighting the experiences of marginalised groups in society, including Asian women and refugees. londec@hotmail.com

MUNDI, a Development Education Centre in Nottingham, has recently launched a project to work with local schools to illustrate the commonalities between the daily lives of receiving host children in the UK and daily lives of refugee and asylum seeker children. Their project also aims to support project schools in reducing the number of racist incidents towards refugee and asylum seeker pupils and present a positive image of the contribution refugees and asylum seekers can make to a school, community, and/or country. <http://www.mundi.org.uk>

Teesside One World Centre work in schools on 'cultural diversity in the curriculum' projects, which have included refugees spending a week in schools to afford the children and staff the opportunity to learn about real life issues related to development education. Work continues in partnership with the North of England Refugee Service and use of the "Escape to Safety" exhibition. <http://www.teessideoneworldcentre.org/>

6.0 Other Examples of Practice

National Refugee Integration Forum(NRIF)

The NRIF website <http://www.nrif.org.uk> website already referred to provides a wealth of relevant information and links to examples of practice that are directly linked to Every Child Matters agendas. There is, for example, an excellent section on the primary education pages that relates to the aims of this research on refugees' contribution to the community:

'In recent years, new communities of refugees have been created in England. The presence of refugees can bring real social, cultural and economic benefits to the areas in which they settle. Primary schools are playing an important role in helping refugee children and parents feel safe and welcome in local communities. By fostering positive inter-community relationships, they are also

helping refugee children and parents contribute to many aspects of community life. Through the school curriculum and special events, such as Refugee Week, primary schools are celebrating the diversity of their local communities and challenging negative, ill-informed stereotyping'.

The site goes on to refer to the importance of peer support and friendships within a school environment and the contribution refugee children can make to enhance a school environment. It also refers to the importance of engaging parents from refugee communities in the life of the school. For example it suggests 'schools can also assist refugee parents to make a contribution to the local community through membership of the school governing body'. As the site states, 'when schools develop good practice in these areas, all pupils benefit'.

The site also includes links to work of several DEA members in areas such as global citizenship including CAFOD, Oxfam, Red Cross and STAR.

Islington Schools

Islington schools are developing curriculum work on refugees in a range of subjects, including the Expressive Arts, PSHE, Citizenship, History, RE, and English. Their excellent website <http://www.islingtonschools.net/services/emas/mobility/> includes the following:

'When teaching about refugees, teachers should be aware that:

- There may be children from a refugee background in the class. Refugee pupils will appreciate their peers developing greater awareness about refugee issues, and they may also appreciate opportunities to share their own experiences. However, teachers need to be sensitive and be careful not to make refugee children feel exposed and vulnerable.
- There is a need to create a supportive environment for pupils to discuss the issues safely. Lesson activities can be planned to support positive identity and self-esteem. Good communication and co-operation can be explicitly taught, for example through role-play and drama. Collaborative strategies can promote empathy, and help build the trust and the participation that allows the expression of genuinely held positions.
- Schools can invite refugee speakers and put up displays that give information about global events and refugees. Empathy can be best developed by providing opportunities in the curriculum for pupils to hear or read about the experiences of refugees first-hand.

One strategy growing numbers of Islington schools are using to increase curriculum work on refugees is to celebrate **Refugee Week**.

General Teaching Council (GTC)

The GTC is developing a series of resource files in conjunction with the work of the Achieve network. The resource files bring together key information for educationalists relating to specific racial equality and diversity issues.

The GTC has completed two resource files:

- a resource file for supporting Asylum-Seeker and Refugee pupils, and
- a resource file for supporting Roma, Gypsies, Travellers of Irish Heritage and other Traveller pupils.

Each resource file details useful and relevant websites and provides an annotated bibliography of relevant publications, research and reports. Particularly valuable for this research are the links to publications and research reports on the lives of refugee children in the UK, including especially material from the Prince's Trust, ESRC, Glasgow Council and range of articles published in Multicultural Teaching, now called Race Equality Teaching.

See: <http://www.gtce.org.uk/networks/achieve/achieveresources/>

7. 0 Consultation Seminar

The issues raised in an early version of this report were discussed at a seminar held on 21 February at the offices of the Department for Constitutional Affairs. In addition to a summary of the main findings being introduced, there were short presentations from three DEA members who are included in this report; Refugee Week, Student Action for Refugees (STAR) and Reconnect. After the presentations the participants separated into small groups to look at the main issues addressed in the report. The key points from the discussions are summarised below.

Perception of Refugees in Society

- Any educational programme or resource cannot ignore the role of the media in shaping peoples' perception of refugees. For many in the UK, refugees and asylum seekers are synonymous with poverty and social problems.
- Schools across the country are likely to respond differently, depending on the proximity of refugee communities. If there are no local refugee communities it can make it difficult, and for some irrelevant, to address the issues in the classroom.
- There are a range of discourses on asylum. Some regard refugees as helpless and in need of assistance, others as an economic or cultural asset to the country and these create contradictory messages. The most productive discourse describes refugees as ordinary people who have lived through extraordinary experiences.
- The most effective method for changing perceptions and attitudes is working with refugees directly.

Young People

- There is a need to strengthen the capacity of young refugees, whose energy, creativity and solution focus is currently under-utilised. We need to enable young refugees to take part in the democratic process, identify their own priorities and become a powerful lobby for themselves.
- Many young refugees feel socially excluded and policies like Every Child Matters provide an opportunity for increasing their engagement in society.
- Initiatives led by young people have been particularly effective and the value of peer learning programmes was highlighted.

Refugee Communities

- There have been refugee communities in the UK for many centuries and it is important that any programmes or projects within schools recognise the historical perspective.
- Refugee communities are an important educational resource, but need to be engaged and supported by teachers.
- The engagement of refugee communities within educational programmes could also be linked to democratic engagement in society.

Role of Schools and Curriculum

- Schools are an important focus because they provide a point for integration as well as learning.
- The citizenship curriculum within schools is currently under used in terms of addressing refugee issues.
- It may be easier for teachers to concentrate on the conflict refugees have fled from or to look at their cultural contribution to society, but this needs to be balanced by illustrations of similarities and shared experiences.
- Teachers need the skills to teach about controversial issues – such as courses for PGCE students – and this is currently not integrated into teacher training. There is pressure on ITET institutions, but some courses allocate only 1 hour in a whole year to look at anti-racism and multicultural education. In one course only 13 out of 200 elected to take an additional course in this area.
- It is important to recognise the difference between teaching at primary and secondary level, as students' views can be more entrenched at secondary level.

Networking and Cross Departmental Working in Government

- There have not been enough opportunities like this seminar for people to share experiences, ideas and approaches. Organisations, teachers, educators and refugee communities would welcome the space and opportunity to learn more from each other and identify programmes of joint work at both a national and local level.
- Further work by any government department needs to complement and build on existing initiatives.
- While it was valuable having three government departments (DCA, Home Office and DfES) at the discussions it is important to include others and there is an urgent need to build on these discussions and make connections to the Home Office website initiative.

Links to Department of Constitutional Affairs Agendas

- Human rights, social justice and political democracy are key to understanding refugee issues.
- Education and learning about the concerns and needs of refugees will lead to wider discussions about rights and political engagement.

8.0 Conclusion

The research undertaken on current resources and activities was reinforced by the discussions with the key stakeholders. Whilst there is a great deal of excellent practice, supported by high quality resources, refugee issues are not seen as mainstream or important by the majority of schools.

Often the best practice is where there are refugee communities within schools, but even then the engagement of schools in this area is variable. For many teachers these subject areas are seen as controversial and outside of the immediate needs of the school. However the work of organisations like Refugee Council and Refugee Week, and the growing emphasis on this area by organisations such as Save the Children demonstrates an increased interest and engagement from schools.

Refugee communities are all too often marginalised and ignored within the education process. Many communities have a great deal to offer to schools and community life.

In taking forward the discussions raised in this report, the following points need to be considered.

- a) There is a need for strategic co-ordination not only across government, but across a wider range of stakeholders. The global dimension agenda needs to be recognised in this co-ordination.
- b) The engagement of refugee communities through schools and education could be immensely valuable, but this needs to be resourced.
- c) Every Child Matters provides an important new opportunity to address these issues.
- d) Teachers need more support, but the nature of that support may well have to be determined locally as it will vary across the country.
- e) The Department for Constitutional Affairs can play an important role in these agendas because of its focus on human rights, social justice and political democracy. However for the Department to play a leading role there needs to be increased recognition that any programmes should be linked to wider debates in society about how refugees are perceived.
- f) Any future resources for schools need to be linked to wider questions around refugee engagement and promoting their expertise and experiences.

Appendix 1

List of participants at consultation seminar, DCA office, 21 February 2006

Name	Organisation
Atul Sharda	DCA
Loretta Chidi	DCA
David Easton	DCA
John Lloyd	DfES
Sonia Akenzua	Home Office
Sarah Thompson	NUT
Jill Rutter	London Metropolitan University
Nora McKenna	Refugee Council
Roisin Cavanagh	Refugee Week
Zuhra Bahman	STAR (Student Action for Refugees)
Aden Shirwa	Somali Advisory Bureau
Theodros Abraham	Reconnect
Andrew Hutchinson	Save the Children
Susie Symes	Britain's Museum of Immigration and Diversity
Margaret Burr	Humanities Education Centre
Giesla Renolds	Global Link
Doug Bourn	DEA
Chris Williams	DEA
Patricia Gilbert	DEA
Jennie O'Donovan	DEA

Appendix 2

Other lists of resources and relevant information:

Home Office: Resources and information on educational issues and needs of refugee communities in schools. <http://www.nrif.org.uk>

DfES: *Aiming High: Guidance on supporting the education of asylum-seeking children and refugees.* <http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk>

Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees: including a literature review for the Commission for Racial Equality [on attitudes towards asylum seekers, refugees and other immigrants. <http://www.icar.org.uk/>

Institute of Race Relations: *Selected bibliography on refugees and associated issues for teacher of the Citizenship Curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4 and 16+ education (2002).* <http://www.irr.org.uk/>

Joseph Rowntree Trust: Links to publications, including *Working with Refugee Children*, Jill Rutter (2003) <http://www.jrf.org.uk/>

Museum of Immigration and Diversity, <http://www.19princeletstreet.org.uk/>

National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum: Teaching refugee and Asylum Seeker Pupils <http://www.naldic.org.uk/>

NUT: *Relearning to learn: Advice to teachers new to teaching children from refugee and asylum-seeking families* <http://www.nut.org.uk/>

Oxfam's catalogue for schools includes a section on resources for teaching about refugees. <http://www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet>

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority: Teaching refugees and asylum seekers. <http://www.qca.org.uk/>

Refugee Action: Publications and audio-visual resources. <http://www.refugee-action.org.uk/>

Refugee Council: Resources for teachers. <http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/>

UNHCR Teaching Tools: a wide range of educational resources for teachers. <http://www.unhcr.org.uk/>

This report has been compiled by staff from the Development Education Association in consultation with a range of its member organisations.

For further details about the Association and its members, see www.dea.org.uk and for specific information on this report contact doug.bourn@dea.org.uk

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