



REFUGEES INTO SCHOOLS

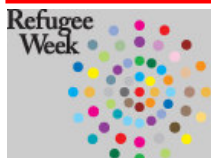
March 2011

Edition 3

Refugees into Schools supports refugee volunteers to visit schools in London, giving interactive presentations to help children and young people understand the impact of conflict and why people are

It's not something you can learn in a normal lesson (13 year old from Brent)

forced to flee their countries. Each refugee volunteer is matched with an experienced mentor who provides guidance and support. *Refugees into Schools* also supports schools to develop a culturally inclusive curriculum and to promote the duties of the Equality Act 2010.



Prepare for Refugee Week 20-24 June 2011

Refugee Week is a unique opportunity to discover and celebrate the contributions refugees bring to the UK. A great way for children to engage with refugees is through *Refugees into Schools*. You can invite one of our refugee volunteers to speak to your pupils about their experiences and

give the children and young people an opportunity to ask questions about why people have to flee their countries. If you are interested, please contact us at: ris@employabilityforum.co.uk or 0207 250 8332.

The Equality Act 2010

The new Equality Act 2010 replaced all existing equality legislation from 1 October 2010. It streamlines the race, gender and disability duties into a single requirement. From 6 April 2011, all public bodies, including schools, will be bound by the public sector equality duty which requires them to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advance equality of opportunity; and
- Foster good relations.

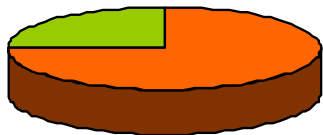


The Act outlines that fostering good relations includes 'the need to tackle prejudice and promote understanding'.

Refugees into Schools can support schools to meet the new equality duty. By listening and talking to refugees, pupils hear first hand experiences of the impact of conflict and persecution. This challenges the myths and stereotypes about asylum seekers and refugees. To support schools and refugee community organisations who want to develop more effective relationships we produce guidance documents and deliver tailored training.

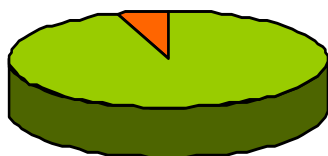
What has been our impact so far?

Our project aims to overcome negative stereotypes about immigrants and increase children's understanding of refugees and why they are forced to leave their countries. Volunteers from *Refugees into Schools* have met with over 1,500 children so far. From our monitoring we can see:



Before the visit from a refugee volunteer **75%** of pupils this term told us they knew 'nothing' or only 'a little' about refugees.

99% of all pupils said the refugee volunteer helped them to understand why people have to leave their countries and become refugees.



95% of teachers said that, as a result of the project, they plan to develop their curriculum to be more culturally inclusive and further embed work on refugees.

Teacher feedback

"We had a PSHE session prior to the visit about refugees and various case studies. This really helped them preparing questions for the presenter and gaining an insight into the whole topic"

"Discussion sessions enabled pupils to discuss and explore relevant issues. A number of our pupils are refugees and this activity raised the profile of refugees in school and enabled them to tell their own stories."

Effective working with local schools - FREE training for Refugee Community Organisations

When: 30 March 2011 Time: 4.30pm-6.30pm
Employability Forum, Old Street, London, N1 6AH

Based on lessons from working with refugee volunteers and schools through *Refugees into Schools*, this session explores a range of options for communities who want to build better relationships with their local schools. Contact Kirsty Anderson for more information.

Introducing... My name is Hagir Ahmed, I am from Sudan. I am taking part in *Refugees into Schools* because I have experience with refugees and migrant communities who fled wars in African countries to the Sudan. I am pleased to have had the chance to share my knowledge of refugees with children in London schools and talk about my own experience.

As part of the project I have visited Downhills Primary in Haringey and St Bartholomew's Primary in Lewisham and met with over 120 pupils which I thoroughly enjoyed. I also benefitted from working alongside my mentor, learning about the project and about the UK school system.

I enjoyed being part of the team and representing *Refugees into Schools*. The project is doing really important work to raise awareness of refugee issues. I want to learn more about schools and continue to get involved in community work in the future.



What do schools think of the project?



Eliot Bank Primary School is based in Lewisham and is part of the West C Collaborative. West C looks for ways to expand their children's awareness and understanding of the people who live and work in their local community and to increase their contribution to it. *Refugees into Schools* gave Year 6 children at Eliot Bank the opportunity to do both. A recent refugee from Iran talked to the pupils about his experiences and answered questions about his life.

Eliot Bank said 'It was a lively and thought provoking session which enabled children to understand a bit more about the impact of conflict and why refugees leave their homes to seek safety from persecution. We are trying to arrange for other refugees involved in this programme to visit more West C schools.'

Feedback from the volunteer said that it had given him a 'voice' and an opportunity to improve his communication skills as well as an insight into a London school. Here are some of the pupil's comments:

I thought it was terrible the way people were treated in Iran. I found it quite surprising that women don't have equal rights as men and I was shocked to know it is legal for the government to beat and even kill you. It is good that some people fight for equal rights.

I would like to say a big thanks. Mo's life must have been really tough. It would be so hard to leave everyone behind but he has helped me to understand why he had to do so.

Get involved!

If you are interested in getting involved in *Refugees into Schools* or would like more information about the project, please contact:

Kirsty Anderson
Employability Forum
ris@employabilityforum.co.uk
02072508332

The Employability Forum

The Employability Forum is an independent organisation that promotes the employment of refugees and the integration of migrant workers in the UK. The Employability Forum works with the voluntary sector, employers and government, using evidence from pilot projects and its network to develop practical policy recommendations.



Refugees into Schools is funded by London Councils