

# SCHOOLS OF SANCTUARY: GIVING A WARM WELCOME

## Resource Overview

*Schools of Sanctuary: Giving a Warm Welcome* supports young people to consider the importance of values like being welcoming and kind in relation to refugees and asylum seekers, and respecting human rights.

By using the resource young people will consider questions such as:

- Why do refugees leave their homes to seek asylum?
- What conditions do asylum seekers face?
- Do you think the UK should be welcoming and supportive to asylum seekers?

They will then use the structure provided to review how welcoming their school is, and to consider measures for improvement. The ultimate aim of the resource is to encourage young people to initiate a process towards their school becoming a [School of Sanctuary](#) thereby starting a longer term programme of work.

*Schools of Sanctuary* is just one of the work streams the [City of Sanctuary](#) network. *City of Sanctuary* is a movement committed to building a culture of hospitality and welcome for all, and especially for refugees seeking sanctuary from war and persecution.

This resource, and the *School of Sanctuary* concept, is relevant to diverse and more homogenous school communities alike. All schools can:

- Create a sense of safety and inclusion for all
- Develop understanding of what it means to seek sanctuary
- Dispel negative myths and stereotypes
- Provide learning opportunities around human rights, social justice, diversity and interdependence
- Strengthen race equality and community cohesion work
- Increase student voice and promote active citizenship

*Schools of Sanctuary – Giving a Warm Welcome* is an empowering resource that invites young people to take action in the arena over which they have the most control – their school and their social circles.

This resource is suitable for curriculum-based classroom learning but it has been written primarily for Oxfam’s Youth Ambassador Groups. Youth Ambassadors meet in their own time (with the support of a teacher) to learn together about global issues, whilst developing the skills and the confidence to make their voices heard. If you are using this resource in an extra-curricular setting then we suggest you [register as a Youth Ambassador Group](#). Registered groups gain access to our structured award scheme, badges and certificates, newsletters, all the latest resources and one-to-one support by phone and email.

By using this resource students will...	The Power Point	The Workshop	The Action Guide
<b>KNOW:</b>			
The definitions of asylum seeker, refugee and economic migrant	✓	✓	
Why asylum seekers come to the UK.	✓	✓	
The main challenges faced by asylum seekers living in the UK, including detention, poor housing and financial difficulty	✓	✓	
The moral and legal case for the UK to provide asylum	✓	✓	
The contribution that migrants make to the UK.	✓	✓	
What becoming a <a href="#">School of Sanctuary</a> means, and the measures that can be taken at school to create a good welcome for all	✓		✓
<b>FEEL:</b>			
Empathy with people having to leave their countries to seek sanctuary	✓	✓	
Empathy with the challenges faced by asylum seekers in the UK including young asylum seekers starting school	✓	✓	
That providing sanctuary in the UK and in schools is an important moral issue	✓	✓	
<b>BE ABLE TO:</b>			
Teach their peers and members of staff about the issues in relation to seeking asylum ( <i>the presentation and workshop are designed for peer teaching</i> )	✓	✓	
Prepare an analysis of their schools own performance in terms of providing a warm welcome to all			✓
Present the case to a senior staff member (such as your headteacher) for working towards becoming an official <a href="#">School of Sanctuary</a>			✓

## Asylum seekers and refugees

Exploring the topic of asylum in the UK is an effective way to put themes such as justice, conflict, poverty and human rights into a specific, localised context. For example, the image below was drawn by a year five child from Highfield Primary School in Leeds as an artistic response to a talk by a refugee who had had to cross a river containing crocodiles. This left a huge impression on the children, many of whom replicated that same account in their responses.



*Photo credit: Highfield Primary School in Leeds. Drawn by a student during Refugee Week 2013.*

Teachers can access first-hand accounts of refugees' stories and case studies through local refugee organisations and the teaching resources referenced at the end of this guide. Additionally, in our multi-cultural society, issues around diversity and acceptance of people from a wide range of backgrounds will be highly relevant to school communities and to young people as individuals. The current Mediterranean migrant crisis only increases the pertinence of the topic.

It is a human right to seek asylum, and the UK has to follow international law and grant asylum to those with a well-founded fear of returning home. In 2013, the UK

received 23,507 new applications for asylum<sup>1</sup>. (Although this number may sound high this accounts for only a small proportion of total net migration: between 2004 and 2012, asylum ranged from 4% to 11% of net migration<sup>2</sup>). However, the UK is a comparatively tough place to secure refugee status. In 2012, 30% of the people who applied for asylum in the UK were granted it. In some countries, such as Switzerland and Finland, over 70% of applications succeed<sup>3</sup>.

Asylum seekers and refugees use their education and skills to enrich society. Albert Einstein, Bob Marley, Michael Marks (who co-founded Marks and Spencer) and Rita Ora are among the best known examples – but less famously, thousands more refugees are making valuable contributions to the well-being of their communities across the country. Schools play a very important part in maximising this contribution, especially as so many refugees and asylum seekers are of school age. When a school creates a safe and welcoming environment for every student (not just for asylum seekers and refugee students) then everyone can thrive and reach their potential. This is the ultimate aim of this resource.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org.uk/about-us/the-uk-and-asylum.html>

<sup>2</sup> <http://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/briefings/migration-uk-asylum>

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0002/8644/Tell\\_it\\_like\\_it\\_is\\_Refugee\\_Council\\_2013.pdf](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0002/8644/Tell_it_like_it_is_Refugee_Council_2013.pdf)

## Teaching resources

This Guardian blog written for Refugee Week provides a comprehensive summary of some of the best teaching resources available:

<http://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2015/may/25/how-to-teach-refugees>

The UN refugee agency also provides a range of resources for teachers:

<http://www.unhcr.org/pages/4ab346796.html>

This BBC Bitesize KS3 Geography revision guide looks at the topic of migration:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/geography/migration/>

These Oxfam resources explore both the broader context and the individual realities of life for people seeking refuge from conflict in South Sudan and Syria respectively:

<http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/south-sudan>

<http://www.oxfam.org.uk/education/resources/syria>

## Powerful videos

Refugee and asylum-seeking children from around the world tell their own fresh and moving stories straight to camera:

<https://www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resource/teachers-tv-refugee-kids-6047898>

This video shows how Lawnswood School in Leeds progressed to officially become a *School of Sanctuary*.

<https://youtu.be/GZA84qYxQ44>

Year 11 Media students from Lawnswood School in Leeds worked over two terms to create this peer education film telling one student's story as a refugee. The final film was premiered at a film club and shown to the whole school during a tutor period.

According to the school it had a huge impact on the other students:

<https://youtu.be/xzrsGuvRaIE>

Five animated stories giving a unique insight into the lives of young people who have sought refuge in the UK, told by the children themselves:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01k7c4q/clips>

Quotes from young asylum seekers can be found in this video from Teachers TV and Big Heart Media: quotes are from the following video from [Teachers TV](#) and Big Heart Media: <https://youtu.be/rUofBJ6XYxl>

## Background reading

The UN Refugee Agency provides plenty of useful facts about refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced people (IDPs) globally and in the UK:

<http://www.unhcr.org.uk/about-us/key-facts-and-figures.html>

<http://www.unhcr.org.uk/about-us/the-uk-and-asylum.html>

This moving report will develop your overall understanding of the issue and contains many first-hand accounts and case studies examining what brings asylum seekers to the UK:

<http://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0001/5702/rcchance.pdf>

## More about Schools of Sanctuary

Visit the Schools of Sanctuary website:

<http://schools.cityofsanctuary.org/>

To learn more about how to become a School of Sanctuary take a look at their pack:

[http://cityofsanctuary.org/files/schools\\_of\\_sanctuary\\_pack\\_national\\_14.7.pdf](http://cityofsanctuary.org/files/schools_of_sanctuary_pack_national_14.7.pdf)

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