UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

TEACHING ABOUT REFUGEES

AGES 9-12

Integrating learning about refugees into different topics at upper primary level

This guide is designed to give some ideas on integrating the topic of refugees into national curriculum pieces. The ideas are simple and easily adaptable to the level of your students.

Find more materials at: unhcr.org/teaching-about-refugees

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

A note about inclusion of refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants in lesson-planning.

Before undertaking any activities on the topic of refugees, asylum, nationality and migrants please take some time to think about the students in your class.

Are some of them refugees, in the process of seeking asylum, or are they stateless? If so, think about talking to them and their parents depending on their age.

If possible include ideas and feedback from parents and the children in sessions and refer to them to answer questions if and only if they have expressly explained that they are interested in answering questions or speaking about these issues.

Stateless persons do not have the nationality of any country. Statelessness can occur in many different situations. For example, certain ethnic or religious groups may be not recognized under national laws as citizens of that country, some children are born outside of the country of their parents' citizenship and are not able to obtain citizenship from their parents' country or the one they were born in.

A number of countries globally have laws which do not allow mothers to pass their nationality to their children.

Stateless persons may have difficulty accessing basic rights such as education, healthcare, employment, freedom of movement and others. Without these things, they often face obstacles and disappointment.

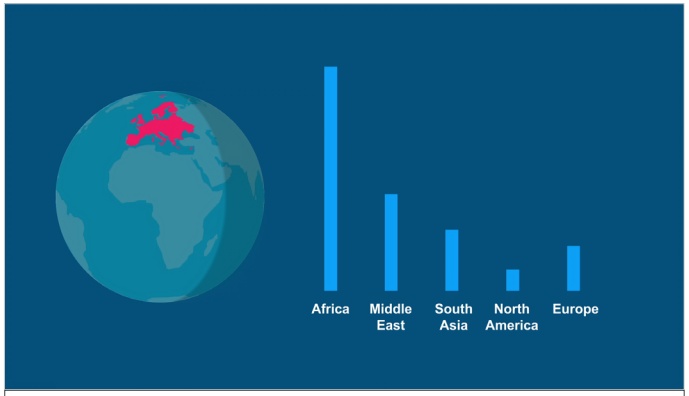
Be careful while using words such as "country" and "nationality" if you have any stateless children in your class. Instead you may use the words "your home" or "your culture".

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GEOGRAPHY

TARGET SKILLS - LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning the countries of the world, understanding geographical terrain, reading and understanding the globe and maps.



Maps of refugee emergencies and further data are available on UNHCR's Data website: data.unhcr.org/

Show the children a map of Europe, Asia, Africa or another region.

STEP 1: Let the students identify the countries they know. See if they can draw flags of the countries that they know. Ask them if they have heard about refugees and whether they know which countries they are from. See if you can pinpoint them together on the map.

STEP 2: Ask a few questions: **"Where is Syria or South Sudan?" "What is the geography like in those countries compared to your country?"**

STEP 3: Go to the school library or bring some atlases and maps into the classroom. Ask the children to work in groups and look at an atlas or map of a country and write down how the terrain of that country is. Ask them to do the same for their own country. You could give some guidance questions, such as **"Is it near the sea or ocean?" "Are there mountains?" "Where on the globe is it?" "How hot do you think it is there?"** Ask the children to find out as much as they can about the countries and the weather in them and to write or make a presentation of how similar or different they are.

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HISTORY

TARGET SKILLS - LEARNING OUTCOMES

Understanding how historical events can impact the lives of individuals.



Developing a lesson plan around a historical or sport figure that is a refugee can be an interesting way to tie in the idea of what a refugee is to history.

OPTION 1: For example, when teaching about the Second World War, famous physicist Albert Einstein can be used as an example of a refugee who fled to the US as an academic.

Information about Einstein can easily be found in on-line encyclopedias and other resources.

OPTION 2: When teaching about the history of the Olympics, the below refugee athletes from the 2016 Olympics could be profiled.

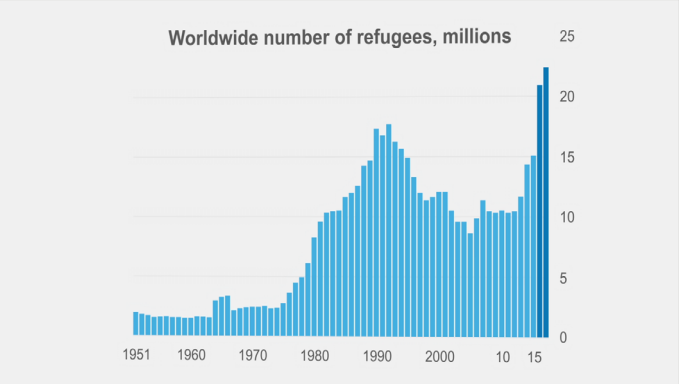
- Yonas Kinde – Athletics: globalcitizen.org/en/content/yonas-kinde-marathon-refugee-olympics-rio-2016/
- Yusra Mardini – Swimming: independent.co.uk/news/people/yusra-mardini-rio-2016-olympics-womens-swimming-the-syrian-refugee-competing-in-the-olympics-who-a7173546.html

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MATHEMATICS

TARGET SKILLS - LEARNING OUTCOMES

No target skill is suggested so that the national curriculum can be followed easily. We advise only to use UNHCR official numbers to integrate learning about refugees into the national curriculum. Teachers therefore have freedom to introduce the numbers in their own way.



Examples of tables containing refugee numbers are available in the Teaching Materials section of the UNHCR Teachers' Toolkit page link.

Using real numbers of refugees that have come from different places can be a good way to introduce children to factual realities about the numbers of refugees in different countries.

STEP 1: On UNHCR's Teaching About Refugees web page (link) you can find a set of sample tables with refugee numbers from some countries in Europe. You can use this as an inspiration to create similar tables for your country and do exercises.

STEP 2: Here are some sample questions you can ask:

"What percentage of refugees came from Eritrea in 2014?"
"What percentage came from the Syrian Arab Republic?"
"What percentage came from the Syrian Arab Republic in 2015?"

Offer students a chance to interpret the numbers – are there patterns or can you think of a way to understand these numbers?

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DESIGN, TECHNOLOGY, CRAFT, ART

TARGET SKILLS - LEARNING OUTCOMES

Developing critical thinking skills and applying them through crafts, design or art.



REFUGEES IN CAMPS

Some refugees live in camps in neighbouring countries to conflicts.

STEP 1: Ask the children where they think these countries are and if they have heard the names of any of these camps?

STEP 2: Look up photos on the internet from Dadaab refugee camp in Kenya, which is one of the largest refugee camps in the world.

STEP 3: Ask the children to think of the needs of refugees in these camps and from the pictures decipher how the refugees have met these needs. Ask them:

"If they were to live in a camp, what kind of logistical or weather challenges may they face?"

"What might they need to be able to survive?"

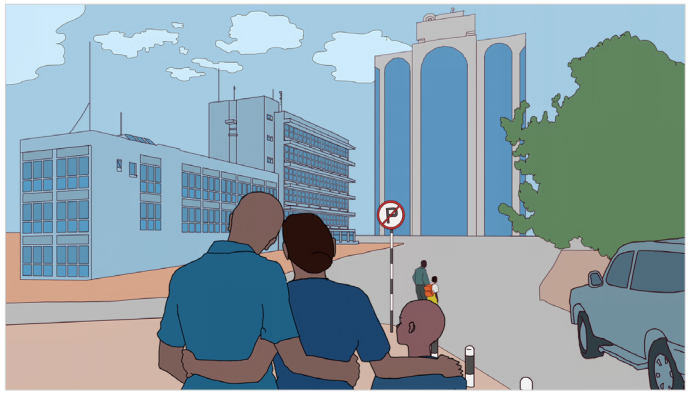
"Can they design a solution to some of these challenges? A warmer tent maybe, or a way to access clean water, a playground or a school."

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DESIGN, TECHNOLOGY, CRAFT, ART

TARGET SKILLS - LEARNING OUTCOMES

Developing critical thinking skills and employing them through technology, project creation, or crafts.



REFUGEES IN CITIES

Many refugees live in cities and towns.

STEP 1: Read and watch the UNHCR news stories below with the children in the class.

Explain that most refugees live in urban settings. In fact, UNHCR figures show that 60% of refugees lived in urban environments at the end of 2016, which is around 13.5 million people.

- News story 1: unhcr.org/news/stories/2016/11/58176abb4/syrian-recyclers-help-tackle-lebanon-garbage-crisis.html
- News story 2: unhcr.org/news/latest/2013/11/528f66086/chinese-schools-offer-primary-education-urban-refugees.html

STEP 3: Ask the students to draw up a list of challenges that might occur when a new population comes to live in a city and see if they can design responses to these challenges. The challenges could be listed under themes such as education, health, transportation, outdoor activity, etc.

Find more materials at: unhcr.org/teaching-about-refugees

These educational materials were developed by Mialy Dermish.

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