

**EU / UK Youth**

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# **Stronger Together for social action**

**Resource pack  
Integration of Refugee students**

<https://www.britishcouncil.be/programmes/education/stronger-together/social-action>



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# Introduction

The [EU / UK Youth Stronger Together](#) is a two-year project (2023-2025) implemented in co-operation with the [European Movement International](#) and co-funded by the [European Union](#). It offers young people aged 15–30 from the EU and the UK opportunities to connect, co-operate, influence and implement change together on issues of common interest.

The project aims to facilitate close and sustainable relationship between young people in the UK and the EU for Europe's collective benefit. We work with various groups of young people through different strands of the programme.

As part of the Social Action strand of the programme focusing on schools, we organise thematic events, workshops, and a competition to facilitate partnership building between schools in the UK and EU.

We aspire to highlight the role of young people aged 15–18 as changemakers, active global citizens and leaders at local, national and European level. You can find out more on:

<https://www.britishcouncil.be/programmes/education/stronger-together/social-action>

## Let's get started!

This project is based on collaboration between students in different countries working together. It is designed to be **student-led**, with support and facilitation from your teacher(s). For the very best results international collaboration is vital. However, the ideas can work well within an individual school too.

The topic of 'Integration of Refugee students' is a very broad one and our focus in this resource is fostering understanding about the experiences of refugees, building skills to reinforce social cohesion and welcoming refugees in educational settings and their communities.

There are two main support documents relevant for the 'Integration of Refugee students' topic. **Stronger Together Teacher Facilitator Notes** are for the teacher facilitators supporting your project. The other is this one, for you, the students, the most important people in the project. The intention is that your teacher facilitators pass over responsibility for this project to you, the students, as soon as possible. Encourage your teacher facilitators to read this document - their role is to support you to lead the project.

Both documents contain more information than you need. Some of it is in **Additional Information** at the end. The internet has hundreds of thousands more pages. Be realistic. You can't do it all. You do not have to read everything or do every activity! You have other subjects to study! You will have to be selective in consultation with your partners in the other schools and colleges.

The project writers have suggested that you make a journey, in stages, with three focal points. These are **Learn, Explore and Act**. As the project evolves and you, the students, get to know each other better, you will almost certainly find new aspects which the project writers and your



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teachers hadn't considered. You will probably put more emphasis on some sections rather than others – making your project as a whole unique.

We would suggest that you take an early look at the final section 'Actions'.

Remember that working together is the aim.

Enjoy!

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## 1. Learn: 'Integration of Refugee students'

### Background information

#### 'No place like home....'

Every day across the world people make the excruciatingly difficult decision to leave their home, families, possessions, connections with their local community and walk away to an uncertain and often frightening future elsewhere. Refugees leave their homes and their country because they simply have no other choice. They are forced out by factors such as war, persecution, natural disasters, environmental crises, and poverty. They may also leave because their government will not or cannot protect them from serious human rights abuses or meet their needs. Whatever the reason, refugees leave their homes because they fear for their own life or safety, or that of their family. Many refugees leave their homes suddenly and are able to take very few, if any, of their possessions with them. Sometimes they face many days, weeks or months of travel, with little food and in fear of their lives.

If refugees do get to safety, they then rely on the people living in the area where they have fled to, in order to make a new life. The population in countries hosting refugees have big choices to make – to welcome and support refugees with understanding and kindness, or to be indifferent to their plight and not help, or to actively reject refugees by making them very unwelcome. People may feel very worried about limited resources and the future of the hosting communities, however the realities of global challenges in a world that is ever-changing make it imperative to find ways forward that recognise strong communities and value everyone's wellbeing.

*Possible group activity within your own country, and then the wider partnership:*

- *share information, in confidence with no names (just Female A, Male B), of people you know who have arrived from another country as new-comers in your community.*
- *have you or people you know reached out to welcome the new-comers?*
- *share any first-hand communication with the new-comers. What do you know about their lives and journeys? Is this directly from the new-comers or from others in your community?*
- *with the international partners, can you find any common threads here?*

**Refugees and Human Rights – every human has the right to safe asylum.**



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Human Rights are central to the status of refugees. People only become refugees because one or more of their basic human rights have been abused or denied. Many are victims of war, political, religious and other forms of persecution. In the chaos and confusion of fleeing their homes to try and find safety in another country, most refugees lose virtually all their rights in practice, along with their material possessions. Many also lose their families and friends. Refugees should be granted the same rights and basic help as any other person who is a legal resident, including freedom of thought and of movement as well as economic and social rights e.g. access to medical care, to education and to work.

'A refugee is a person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country...' (Definition quoted from the United Nations Convention on the Status of Refugees, 1951).

*Possible group activities within you own country, and then the wider partnership*

- *Discuss - is there a difference between refugees and asylum seekers?*
- *Find out and discuss how refugees in your country gain "access to medical care, to education and to work", and share with others.*
- *how can or did you find this information?*
- *from your findings and discussion, do the systems work well? Give examples.*
- *how could they be improved? Give examples.*

## **Child Refugees**

Child refugees are particularly vulnerable, traumatised and often have their rights denied. They may have become separated from their families and are at great risk of mistreatment. Some become recruited to fight as child soldiers, or are abused and exploited, some are forced to work in dangerous environments. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) grants special protection to refugee children (article 22). Refugee children who are not being cared for by their parents are entitled to further protection. Like all children, refugees are entitled to all of the rights granted under UNCRC, including the right to life, adequate food and medical care, education, and to be free from discrimination, exploitation and abuse.

*Look at the website of "The Separated Child Foundation" - <https://separatedchild.org>*

*Collaboration: Are there groups like this in your country? What priorities has this UK based group identified? Is there one you would prioritise? (You might want to link these to the 'Action' section)*

## **World Refugee Day**

This commemorative day, held annually on 20<sup>th</sup> June, was designed to draw international attention to the increasingly desperate situation faced by displaced people across the globe and to honour the determination of the affected people and those working to help them. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the global refugee organisation with special responsibility for leading and coordinating international action to protect refugees and



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solve refugees problems. Its most important purpose is to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees and to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find a place of safety in another State.

### **Environmental refugees**

People forced to leave their homes because of environmental factors are considered a new type of refugee. This is highly interconnected with our previous topic of 'Climate and Sustainability'. Some reports predict that rising sea levels, desertification, soil erosion and shrinking fresh water supplies - all made worse by climate change - could create up to 50 million environmental refugees within the next 10 years.

"We need to invest now in preparedness to mitigate future protection needs and prevent further climate caused displacement. Waiting for disaster to strike is not an option."

Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees

*Collaborative discussion – as a starting point have you met any environmental refugees 'escaping' from something of this sort in your country? How are they doing this?*

### **Welcoming Refugees**

Once a refugee reaches a place of safety in another state they can lodge an application for protection and become an asylum seeker. There are many ways in which life for refugees and asylum seekers can be made better. Firstly, governments all around the world need to consider the policies and actions which are forcing people to leave their homes. The way those seeking safety in another country are treated also needs to be improved. Richer countries have a moral imperative to take a more equal share and care of the global refugee population. The poorest parts of the world, and therefore those areas with the least resources to offer, actually host the greatest number of refugees: Africa and Asia have 60% of the world's refugees.

*Collaborative activity:*

*Identify from your research on the web and in the media which countries are*

- *hosting the most refugees.*
- *under the greatest pressure to host more.*

*Discuss your thoughts about the best way of reducing these pressures and making a more secure environment for refugees.*

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## **2. Explore: Integration of Refugee Students**

In this section you will find several suggestions for student-led activities, supported by your teacher facilitators. Please adapt the materials according to your school context, and, importantly, the needs and dynamics of the groups in the partner institutions. Flexibility and adaptability are highly recommended. One size does not fit all!



## 2a Real, relevant and current issues

Some of you will be extremely globally aware. Others will have gaps in knowledge and understanding.

A good starting point would be 'What's in the news about refugees and migrants?' Your group members will rapidly identify the key issues for themselves.

- This would be a good moment for a live class-to-class online meeting.
- The student or teacher facilitator can then prompt student-led research online and elsewhere, which can be shared.
- The student or teacher facilitator can introduce key concepts, share a video or sound clip, and steer their group to the relevant topics by providing a resource or news story they might not have found.

Choose one or more of the identified new items and use an Issues Tree to unpack thinking.

- Draw a large outline of a tree, with the Issue of your choice on the trunk.
- The causes or roots of the problem are written in amongst the roots of your tree and the possible solutions become leaves. The soil might be 'conflict' or 'uncertainty' or 'change'. There might be two trees, one for refugees, the other for migrants.
- This can be left on display and added to as learning deepens.

## 2b. What would you take?

Go online and find the British Council Queens of Syria pack:

[https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/queens\\_of\\_syria.pdf](https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/queens_of_syria.pdf)

On page 7 you will find **Activity sheet 2 – What would you take?** Ask the students to work in small groups. Give each group a copy of the cards on Activity Sheet 2. Ask them to cut them up and lay them out on the table. Tell each group that they are a family who have to leave their home country quickly and become refugees. They have been given only 10 minutes to gather up 10 things to take with them to their new host country. Before they are properly organised, ask each group to swap tables with another to represent the journey they have made, taking their 10 cards with them.

Once in their new 'home' tell them that circumstances have changed for the worse and they are now in a situation where they can only keep four of their items. Which ones will they choose? Ask the groups to discuss and then provide justifications for their choices.

Display the chosen item cards or worksheets in a prominent place, where everyone can see them. Compare the results of the groups, both in the room and with your partners.

- Are any of the chosen items common to all groups?
- Discuss with the students the impact that having your possessions taken away from you might have.

*This activity appears in both the Living Together: Refugees Pack and The Queens of Syria Pack (see Useful links section below).*



## 2c. Refugees through Art

This activity looks at the different ways refugees are depicted in art across Europe historically. The full activity can be found on the UKGLAS website 'Get Creative with Art Online'

<https://www.getcreativewithart.org/08-migrants-and-refugees.html>

**How might an artist interpret the notion of REFUGEES in a work of Art?** With certain colours? With certain shapes? With certain subjects? Would it be obvious or hidden? How would YOU represent a refugee artistically if you were drawing a picture?

Look online for the painting is 'THE REFUGEE GIRL/SLEEPING FLOWER GIRL' painted by Greek artist GEORGIOS IAKOVIDIS, 1853-1932, completed after 1900. You will find it here:

<https://www.getcreativewithart.org/08-migrants-and-refugees.html>

What are your emotional responses: What do you think about its physical characteristics? Do you think it conveys something about the life of a refugee? How does it make you feel? Can we relate it to our own lives?

How does the artist depict the refugee child? What do you think are the conditions of her life? Does the painting communicate anything about the rights of refugees and children?

### **Can other artworks help us to understand our theme?**

Search online for images of the artwork MIRROR OF HUMANITY by JOSEPH KANGI, South Sudan, (2019).

What does Kangi's work say about the theme? (Kangi suggests 'We need to put our hands together to build a better world, one that does not see colour or differences, only what unites us').

Can your group find more examples of art depicting refugees or the global issues relating to refugees online? What messages do the artworks you find convey? What does the historical nature of these artworks tell us about the concepts of migration and refugees? Most of these artworks are museum pieces. How do they relate to the present day?

Are there other artforms you could explore to see how refugees are depicted through art? For example, literature, music, film, animation, sculpture, conceptual art etc. etc.

## 2d. The Global Goals and Refugees

Consideration has already been given to the many reasons that people might leave their homes and either migrate or be forced to leave and seek refuge elsewhere as refugees.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals were set up in 2015 as a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. They outline basic needs for societal and world harmony.

<https://sdgs.un.org/goals> You may wish to read more about these goals and their underlying targets. Print out a list of the 17 Global Goals for the activity below.

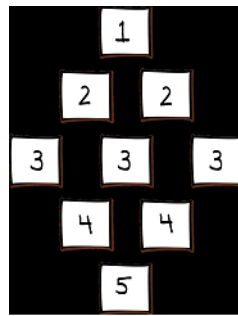
### **Which Global Goals are most relevant for refugees who are on the move?**

Many of the Global Goals impact directly on the situation in which refugees find themselves, especially when at their most vulnerable when on the move. To flee 'push' factors, such as war, climate disaster or famine in your home country means leaving behind safe and reliable access





to clean water (Global Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation) and nutritious food (Global Goal 2: Zero Hunger). These 2 Global Goals are perhaps the most fundamental to sustain life.



Working in a small group construct your own Diamond Nine, with one of these two goals (Global Goal 6 or 2) at the top – it's your choice.

There are 17 goals, so as a group you will need to decide which other 8 goals make it in your Diamond Nine. One by one, the members of your group should take turns to choose a Global Goal to add and where to add it in the diamond shape. Towards the top of the Diamond (position 2) is where the most important Global Goals should be added, working down the numbered positions in priority order. Once you have decided on your Global Goal and where you would like to place it, you need to persuade the rest of the group that it belongs there, with reasons and explanations for your choice.

Once each group has decided on their Diamond Nine the groups can circulate to have a look and see what other groups decided.

Now go back to your own Diamond Nine – have you changed your views? Make any changes you agree to as a group.

Now it's time to discuss your choices in your own group, with others in the room and across countries with partners online.

### **Which Global Goals are most relevant for refugees who are settled in a new place?**

The first activity explores the Global Goals for refugees who are on the move but what about when they settle in other countries?

In the new country refugees might have to cope with a different language, unfamiliar food, new music and style of clothing, different education systems, a more expensive cost of living, limited employment options, a change of social status etc.

You could repeat the Diamond Nine exercise, now reflecting on the situation of refugees who are in the process of settling in a new place. Is there a change of emphasis in which Global Goals are prioritised? If so, how do these differ?

In small groups, now consider what actions could be taken to help facilitate the need to feel settled, comfortable, and accepted in the new place. Refugees often strive to become part of their new communities and many organisations exist to support them. Research charities and groups that help aid this transition. One to start might be Migrateful, an organisation that provides cookery classes to build confidence in refugees with skills who have yet to access paid work. <https://www.migrateful.org/>





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### 3. Act: Integration of Refugee Students

When considering how we can act together to make a difference it is important to consider actions that will have a sustainable effect and that hopefully will outlast or develop after the project has ended.

Responsible action starts with thinking critically and building the foundations of knowledge and understanding by unpacking issues together.

#### 3.a. Thinking critically about Refugees

According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) the number of people forcibly displaced is now 108.4 million, and there are over 35.3 million refugees in the world today (most up-to-date figures are for 2022). Almost all are victims of wars, conflicts, and climate change and most of them are based in the countries of the Global South. European countries host a fraction of the world's refugees.

In the Queens of Syria Pack Reem, a Syrian refugee living in Jordan, gives her account of her feelings about leaving Syria.

'I really didn't want to leave Syria at all. We only left after we'd moved at least six times inside Syria, but we found that there is no safe place for us. My father decided that we'd leave for Jordan. I was totally against him in the beginning, but now after a few years I think that he was totally right, and he was thinking about us and just thinking as a father, he was just thinking about us, about my brother, and now I'm so happy for my brother, because my brother was in the age of the military service, so if he had just gone to the army, he will be even a killer or a dead man, so now I feel, I feel that yes, thank God that we left Syria here to Jordan. But it also breaks my heart because yeah, it's not that easy a thing, because day after day you just feel that your home is far away from you'.

Reem chose her house keys when she took part in the 'What would you take?' activity.

Bearing in mind Reem's thoughts, do some online research about why people become refugees. Then work your way through the following questions:

**Individual private questions:** *what do I think about this personally? Why do I think like I do? To what extent am I open to changing my point of view?*

What does home mean to you?

If you had to leave your home in a crisis and could only take what you could carry, what did you choose to take with you? Why?

In this context, how do you understand saying 'home is where the heart is'?

**Group Dialogue questions:** *What do other people think about this? How can I find different perspectives to my own? Analyse assumptions, implications, and contradictions. And how can I engage with complexity, conflict, uncertainty, and difference with integrity?*

Group discussion with the partners:



- Share thoughts on the previous questions.
- What does each partner think about this?
- Research the proportion of the world's refugees hosted in your country.
- Have any refugees been received in each school? and community?
- What has gone well in welcoming new arrivals?
- Have there been any problems? For whom? If so, what?
- How have these been overcome? Show the solutions on the Issues tree (Activity 2.a.)

Deeper questions for further discussion, more generally and /or in collaboration with the international partners:

- What assumptions, implications and contradictions have we uncovered in this conversation?
- Many refugees have left behind a life of pain and suffering, and they have to deal with bad memories of past experiences. What implications does this have for their capacity to make a new life?
- What implications does welcoming traumatised people have for the host countries?
- What responsibilities do those in more comfortable circumstances have for those in crisis?
- What are the push and pull factors that people must consider when facing becoming a refugee?
- What do host countries gain when providing refuge to asylum seekers and refugees?

### 3b. Spotlight Ukraine: Refugees in the media

The following texts have all appeared in the media in recent times.

Text 1: Published by the BBC on its News website on 4th July 2022.

'At least 12 million people have fled their homes since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the United Nations (UN) says. More than five million have left for neighbouring countries, while seven million people are still thought to be displaced inside Ukraine itself. However, hundreds of thousands of refugees have returned to their home country - especially to cities like Kyiv.

Where are refugees going? The UN says that, as of 4 July, more than 5.2 million refugees from Ukraine have been recorded across Europe. More than 3.5 million have applied for temporary residence in another country:

- Russia: (estimated) 1,412,425
- Poland: 1,194,642
- Moldova: 82,700
- Romania: 83,321
- Slovakia: 79,770
- Hungary: 25,800
- Belarus: 9,820

Others have moved on to other countries, especially those who crossed into Poland, Hungary and Slovakia. These nations have open borders with other EU states.



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The UN says there are more than 867,000 Ukrainians in Germany, almost 382,768 in the Czech Republic and 141,562 in Italy.'

**Text 2: Published by Statista Research Department, Sep 14, 2023**

'Nearly 1.3 million refugees from Ukraine due to the Russian invasion were recorded in Russia as of December 31, 2022. Furthermore, approximately 970 thousand were present in Poland after having fled Ukraine as of September 3, 2023. In total, around six million Ukrainian refugees were registered across Europe and 6.2 million worldwide as of September 2023. Most of them fled the country by crossing the border with Poland.'

**Text 3: Participant witness:**

'In October 2023 a 17-year student from Odessa told one of our researchers: "I left Ukraine after the war started because I wanted to study at a higher level so I can go to a better university".'

Read the texts carefully and devise a list of the main points. Now do some local research as a team:

- on the numbers of Ukrainian citizens in your community.
- find out how they are being supported in your community.
- where possible, invite representatives to meet your group.

Find out who is your elected representative, at local, national and international levels. You could contact them to find out what their opinions are on the issue of refugees and what they do to support social cohesion and community initiatives aimed at welcoming and settling refugees. If you disagree with their opinions, or feel strongly about this issue, then you could write to them expressing your views. If you agree with their approach you could also write to them supporting their actions.

**3c. Schools of Sanctuary**

Schools hold a very special place in their communities. They are hubs where everyone with children in the locality comes together, with inclusion as their watchword. It's where the younger members of society gather each day – the future-shapers and decision makers of tomorrow. Schools have a powerful role in building welcoming and safe communities, demonstrating understanding and compassion.

A great example of a school initiative from the UK and Ireland cross Europe are Schools of Sanctuary. A School of Sanctuary has signed up to be:

- A school, nursery or sixth form that fosters a culture of welcome and safety for people seeking sanctuary, including asylum seeking and refugee families.
- A school that educates the whole school community about the experiences and realities of people who have been forced to flee to foster empathy and understanding.
- A school that plays an active role in building a culture of welcome by connecting with and supporting local refugee organisations, collaborating with other institutions to raise awareness and advocate for a kinder approach towards those seeking safety.

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### Possible Action:

Other countries will have similar schemes – find out what exists in your country to support refugee children in schools.

Does your school have in place measures to make it a safe and welcoming place for refugees? If not, you could form a working group within your school to bring about these measures and support refugees and displaced young people in your school community to build a future in their new home. Make an appointment to see your Headteacher and raise the possibility.

### 3.c. What do we do next as a collaborative partnership?

- Agree a partnership report for your website and other media outlets.
- Share your learning and conclusions with others in your school and community.
- Develop new links with refugee groups in your area and develop a practical programme of benefit to all parties eg. shared cookery classes, like Migrateful.

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### Useful links

- Schools of Sanctuary: <https://schools.cityofsanctuary.org/about> Living Together, Resource Pack, British Council  
[https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/living\\_together\\_-\\_refugee\\_education\\_pack3.pdf](https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/living_together_-_refugee_education_pack3.pdf)
- Migrateful, <https://www.migrateful.org/>
- *The Separated Child Foundation*, <https://separatedchild.org>
- Queens of Syria, Resource Pack, British Council  
[https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/queens\\_of\\_syria.pdf](https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/queens_of_syria.pdf)
- UKGLAS website 'Get Creative with Art Online', <https://www.getcreativewithart.org/08-migrants-and-refugees.html>
- UN Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs, <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

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