

Workshop outline in support of Escape to Safety

The dynamic of the workshop is dependent on a number of factors, mainly:

- number of participants
- time and space available
- number of helpers

The outline given here refers to this ideal situation:

- classroom available very near to the exhibition
- 50/60min workshop
- 20/25 participants
- 2 helpers

The workshop is structured as follows:

- 10/15 min introduction to the topic
- 30min activities
- 15min reflection/conclusion time post exhibition

Introduction (10/15min):

The first aim of the introduction is to explore participants' values and perceptions around the topic of asylum and immigration. For this a number of options are available, depending on the age of the participants and on what is deemed to be more appropriate at the time.

Usually you would start by asking participants to thought shower over the following questions:

- what do you know about asylum seekers and refugees?
- what have you heard about asylum seekers and refugees?

Another common option is to provide participants with a copy of the questionnaire (see page 2 of '*Passport Based Activities*' document at www.globallink.org.uk/RefExResources/) that contains the most commonly assumed stereotypes and misconceptions about asylum seekers and refugees. You would ask the participants to work on their own, and encourage them to cross checking their answers with information provided during the workshop and in the exhibition.

The second aim of the introduction is to provide the participants with the definition 1951 Convention for the Status of Refugees. This will enable participants to have a better idea as to whom refugees are, as opposed to economic migrants for example.

Participants are not told the definition of the Convention. Visual aids in the form of posters, photographs, drawings and headlines from major newspapers are used to engage the participants and promote a stimulating learning environment. So for example when looking at why people are forced to leave their homes, our education worker might use the drawing that a child from DR

Congo made which depicts soldiers shooting at civilians, people hiding underneath their beds etc.

Activities (30min)

After the introduction, you will start sending participants through the exhibition in small groups. There will be an element of disruption at this point simply because the small groups will be leaving the class at different times.

It is recommended that the group be a minimum of 2 to a maximum of 6 people. If a group of 2 leaves, send the next two after about 4 min etc. If a bigger group leaves, then increase the time delay between groups. What should be borne in mind is that, once at the trailer, participants will be sent through one at a time and intervals of about 1 to 2 min.

During this time, while groups leave for the exhibition and some will eventually come back, the participants can engage in a series of stimulating activities (see '*Passport Based Activities*' at www.globallink.org.uk/RefExResources/). All of these activities have been designed to encourage participants empathise with the plight of refugees. Participants will explore what it might mean to leave home in a situation of danger or war; they will experience the problems that refugees encounters when asked to fill in forms in a language not so familiar to them; they will read a poem written by a refugee boy and reflect on feelings of isolation, neglect and longing to be seen as an 'equal'.

During this time, you will have a situation whereby some groups will be leaving to go to the exhibition and others will be coming back. Each activity should not take any more than 5/10 min to do, so that participants will not feel that they are walking away or into something that has been going on for a while.

Once all participants have left for the exhibition, you should have at least 10 people who have come back from it. Here is when the reflections start.

Reflections/Conclusions (15min)

At this point, you will want to invite participants to reflect on their own experiences. You should start by giving them some time to talk about how they felt with the person sitting next to them. In our experience participants, especially Y6, Y7, Y8 and Y9 tend to be emotionally stunned. They will be feeling sad, scared, sorry for refugees etc. In a group, invite them to share their experiences. Give them time to talk about their emotions. Once most of the class has come back from the exhibition, you can ask about to dig a bit deeper into each of the stories of the three refugees that they encounter on their journey. Why did they leave? How? Once in the UK, what happened? Were they welcomed?

You should familiarise yourself with the soundtrack (transcription can be downloaded at www.globallink.org.uk/RefExResources/) as participants will make reference to it, the most common one being to the asylum seeker who was found hanged by his shoelaces in a detention centre.

Keep the discussion going by asking 'Was there anything that surprised/shocked you?', 'How would you feel if that had happened to you?'

Most participants will come up with comments that highlight the plight of refugees and will show great sympathy towards them. This is great, but remember that one important point that you should also highlight is the positive contributions that refugees make to the host country. Ask them if they recognised anyone in there. They will all tell you that they did not know that Einstein or Prince Philip were refugees. Invite them to think why they think we put them there.

And finally, you should encourage the participants to make links between what they have just experienced and their own realities and what they can do with what they have just learnt.