

GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

Recommended approaches for teaching the subject of forced displacement in primary and secondary schools and use of UNHCR's Teaching About Refugees teaching materials.

UNHCR's Teaching About Refugees website
<https://www.unhcr.org/teaching-about-refugees.html>



INTRODUCTION

Thank you for downloading UNHCR's Teaching About Refugees guide for teachers. This booklet will provide you with ideas and pedagogical approaches on how to teach about forced displacement and to use the Teaching About Refugees teaching materials in your specific teaching context.

You will read about reasons why you may want to teach about refugees in your classroom and build your students' knowledge about the subject. You will also read about some challenges you may be facing when you are teaching refugee children in your classroom, especially when they are still in a phase where they are adapting to new environment after being displaced.

Both approaches seem very different but you can see them as two sides of the same pedagogical coin.

Refugees hosted in classrooms with teachers and children that know *where they come from, why they were displaced and how they arrived in a new community* will find themselves in a far more constructive and knowledgeable learning environment than those who are hosted in communities that reject them. Teachers and students welcoming refugees in their classroom will benefit from a *better understanding of some of the world's most pressing challenges*, including war and forced displacement.

Education is a human right and a fundamental right of refugees in their host countries. It is also the foundation upon which many refugee children and their families can rebuild their lives and thrive.

We hope this dual pedagogical approach of teaching *about* and teaching *with* refugees will benefit both displaced learners and the teachers and students that welcome them.



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

Who are we?

[UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency](#), is a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for people forced to flee their homes because of conflict and persecution.

We lead international action to protect refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people.

We deliver life-saving assistance, help safeguard fundamental human rights, and develop solutions that ensure people have a safe place called home where they can build a better future. We also work to ensure that stateless people are granted a nationality.

We work in over 130 countries, using our expertise to protect and care for millions.

How to read this guide



ON-LINE

This guide for teachers is an interactive PDF. You can open and read this document on your computer and **click on the links** in the guide to immediately view corresponding teaching materials on [UNHCR's Teaching About Refugees web page](#) - your computer will open a browser window every time you click on a link.

This is an easy way to switch between the guide and the web page.



OFF-LINE

If you do not have a computer, tablet or other device to read on, **print this guide** for teachers, read to the end and use the approaches suggested in your lesson plans. Try and get on-line whenever you can to access the teaching materials or ask someone to download them for you.

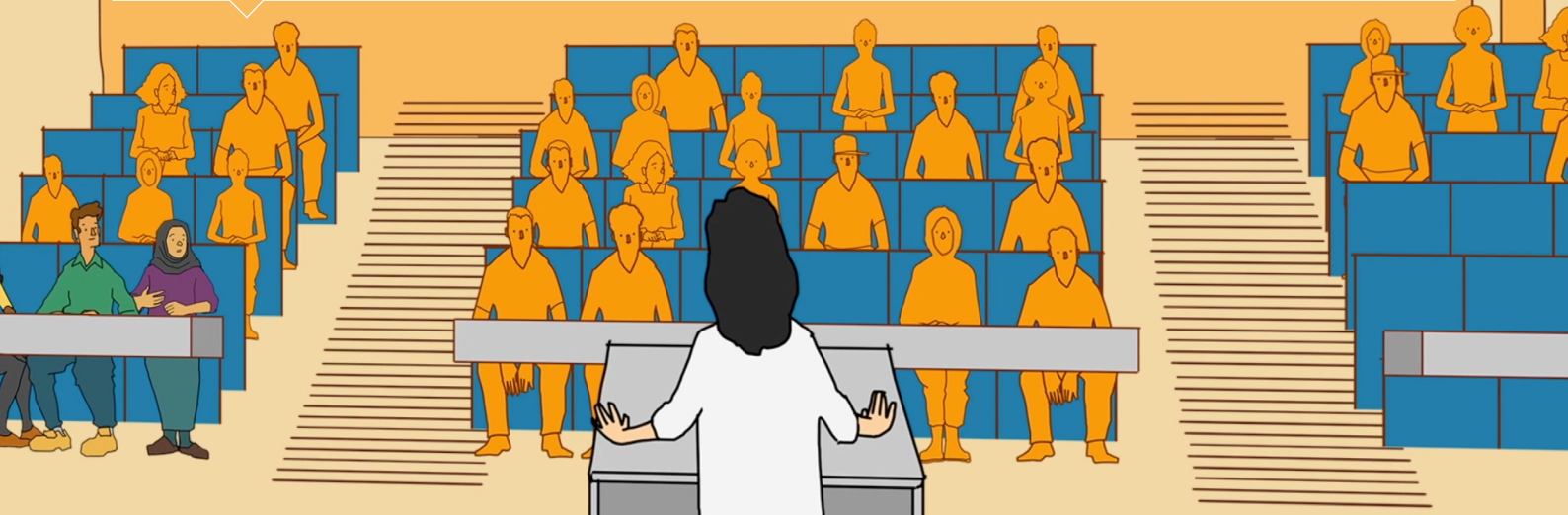
Think about the environment when you use a printer. Only print this guide if you absolutely need a hard copy.



Teaching
About
Refugees

Find the Teaching About Refugees web page on

[unhcr.org/teaching-about-refugees](https://www.unhcr.org/teaching-about-refugees)



Pedagogical approach #1

WHY TEACH ABOUT REFUGEES?

The number of people forced to flee their homes because of war, violence or persecution currently stands at the highest level since the end of World War II. Some countries have been affected by war, conflict and violence for years or even decades. New conflicts have erupted, forcing ever more people to flee. The world is facing an unprecedented forced displacement crisis.

As a result of this, the internet and social media are bustling with information and opinion on the topic and refugees and migrants regularly make headlines in the news. Unfortunately, there is a lot of inaccurate, outdated and factually incorrect information out there. Making sense of forced displacement and its complexities in this context has become increasingly challenging for students, teachers and parents. In the worst case, poor information will feed prejudices and misinformation.

Teachers and schools play a key role in equipping children and young people with the knowledge to make sense of the topic.

They can teach young people to separate facts from fiction and opinion. In the school environment, it can contribute to better mutual understanding between displaced learners and their host communities, which will contribute to an inclusive environment conducive to learning in diversity.

Pedagogical approach #2

WHY TEACH WITH REFUGEES?

Refugee and asylum-seeking children often face multiple challenges when they start going to school in another country. They have to learn a new language, they have to adapt to a different culture, a different school system and a new life. They often have to catch up on education they may have missed as a result of being displaced. These challenges often come on top of other problems, such as potential stress and trauma resulting from their journey to safety and social and financial challenges in their home and family life.

For most refugee, asylum-seeking and stateless children going school is one of the most important things they can do to return to normality after being displaced.

School provides a safe environment. It gives structure to the day. It allows children to socialize and interact with others. Above all, it provides children with knowledge and skills that will allow them to live full and productive lives.

Teachers, school personnel, students from the host community, parents and others all contribute to that educational journey. That is why it is important to equip teachers and other key persons in the school community with some basic knowledge about the situation of refugees and to make them aware of some of the challenges they may face. This, too, contributes to a more inclusive and constructive learning environment.

Build your knowledge about refugees

We recommend that you take a **step-by-step approach** when teaching about refugees and teaching with refugees. Start by building your own 'knowledge pyramid' and familiarize yourself thoroughly with basic concepts *before* you move on to facts and figures and more advanced subjects.

Read through the guidance below and follow each step as indicated. Keep the approaches to explaining concepts (in the text boxes) in the back of your head when you start putting together lesson plans and when you start applying your teaching to students.

STEP 1 - WORDS MATTER

Refugees, asylum and migration are complex topics, but they can be easily grasped if the most common terminology to designate displaced people is understood.

You need to thoroughly understand these **four categories** of displaced persons. They are the 'blocks' you will need to teach first to build the knowledge of your students.



An easy pedagogical approach to grasp these different categories of displaced persons is to always consider these three central questions

1. Where have people moved?

Are they still inside their own country or are they in another country?

2. Why have they moved?

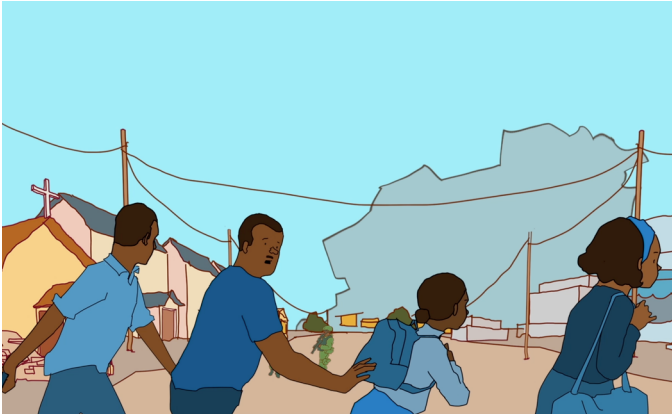
Did they move because they were in danger and had no choice but to move?

3. What are the rights of the people who have moved?

What do local and international laws and regulations say? Can they be sent back to their own country? Do they have the right to work or get an education?

Using these questions as a guideline we can turn to answers for each category of displaced person.

REFUGEES



WHERE?

Refugees are per definition **outside of their own country**. They have crossed at least one international border.

WHY?

Refugees have moved because they were **in danger** as a result of war, violence or persecution. Refugees are *forcibly* displaced. This means they had no choice but to leave, otherwise they would continue to be exposed to danger.

RIGHTS?

International law says that refugees **cannot be sent back** to their own country if this puts them at risk of war, violence or persecution. They have a right to remain in the host country. They also have a right to work in the host country, to health care, to education, they have the right to rent or acquire a place to live, and they have other fundamental rights such as freedom of expression and religion.

MIGRANTS



WHERE?

Migrants are per definition **outside of their own country**. They have crossed at least one international border. Migrants can only be found outside their own country, like refugees.

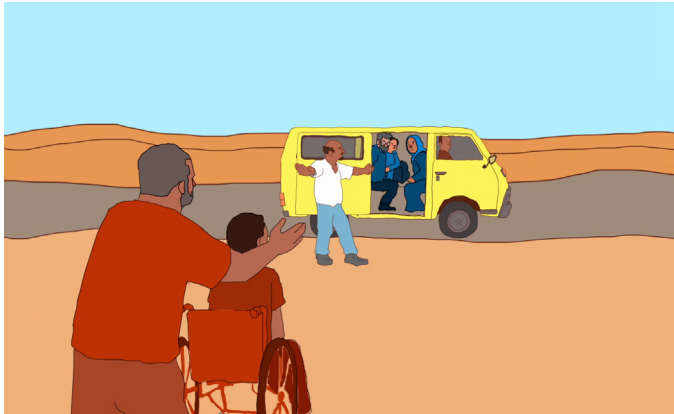
WHY?

Migrants have moved because of **other reasons than war, violence or persecution**. This is where they differ fundamentally from refugees. Migrants, could in principle return to their own countries without being in immediate danger. However, they may have very good reasons to leave. Some migrants may move to work legally in another country, because they want to join family or get an education. More compelling and precarious reasons like poverty, natural disasters, food shortages or other reasons may drive many to leave as well.

RIGHTS?

Most States and some regional organizations regulate movements of migrants under their own **migration laws**. Some countries, for example, offer opportunities for people to migrate legally to work or study or for family members or spouses to join one another in another country. These arrangements differ from the international laws protecting refugees.

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE (IDPs)



WHERE?

Internally displaced people (also called 'IDPs') are per definition **still inside their own country**. They may have moved from one location to another inside their country but they have crossed no international border.

WHY?

Internally displaced people have moved from their homes because they were **in danger** as a result of war, violence or persecution. Like refugees, this means they had no choice but to leave, otherwise they would continue to be exposed to danger. In contrast to refugees, however, they move to *another part of their own country* to find safety.

RIGHTS?

Internally displaced people stay within their own country and remain under the **protection and laws of their country's government** even if that government is the reason for their displacement, for example because the government is persecuting certain groups in the country.

Internally displaced people often move to areas where it is difficult for agencies like UNHCR to deliver humanitarian assistance. As a result, these people are among the most vulnerable in the world.

A note on the word 'persecution'

Persecution can take many forms and can force people of all walks of life to flee.

The 1951 Refugee Convention says that someone is a refugee if he or she has 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 or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country'*.

To name a few examples of what persecution means in this context, people may be jailed, mistreated, hurt or worse just because of their race, religion, nationality, political opinions or belonging to a certain group of people. When this is the case, and the person has crossed at least one border, this person is a refugee according to the criteria in international law.

ASYLUM-SEEKERS



WHERE?

Asylum-seekers are per definition **outside of their own country**. They have crossed at least one international border. Asylum-seekers can therefore only be found outside their own country, like refugees and migrants.

WHY?

Asylum-seekers are claiming asylum in another country. This means that **we don't know yet whether they are refugees** or whether they fall in other categories of displaced people. Claiming asylum in another country means that you are asking another country for '*international protection*' from dangers such as war, violence and persecution.

Typically this means that asylum-seekers are seeking to be recognized as refugees because they are 1. *outside* of their country 2. they fled because of *danger* (war, violence, persecution) 3. they would be in danger if they would be *sent back* - see the definition of refugees.

RIGHTS?

Claiming asylum in another country is a **human right**. Most countries in the world have asylum procedures in place to determine if persons arriving from other countries, and who are claiming to be in danger, can be recognized as refugees. This usually involves examining documents and other information provided by the asylum-seeker to determine if their claim is credible. In many cases, asylum-seekers are also interviewed extensively to determine if they have a '*well-founded fear of being persecuted*' and if they would be in danger if they return to their country.

A note on the word '*international protection*'

When you start searching for documentation about refugees and asylum, you will often come across the legal term '*international protection*'. This term is derived from the international laws on refugees. Protection in this case simply means that people fleeing danger in their own country, can stay in safety and enjoy fundamental rights in another country and that they cannot be sent back if this puts them at risk. Keep this simple principle in mind if you come across the term '*international protection*'.

REFUGEE RIGHTS



Refugees are protected by international law.

The [1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol](#) are the key legal documents at the origin of this system of international protection of refugees.

149 States are parties to the Convention, the Protocol or both. These international legal texts define the term ‘refugee’ and outline the rights of refugees, as well as the legal obligations of States to protect them.

Remember, we defined refugees as 1. *outside* of their country 2. they fled because of *danger* (war, violence, persecution) 3. they would be in danger if they would be *sent back*.

The core principle of the 1951 Refugee Convention is non-refoulement:

Refugees cannot be returned to a country where they face serious threats to their life or freedom.

In addition to this right, the Convention grants refugees social and economic rights, such as the right to work in the host country, the right to health care, to education, they have the right to rent or acquire a place to live. They also have other fundamental rights such as freedom of expression and religion.



Words matter: on-line materials

To learn more about basic terminology, look through the [Words Matter section of the Teaching About Refugees web page](#) and watch the [animations](#) on each topic.

unhcr.org/teaching-about-refugees.html#words

Words matter - summary table

	refugees	migrants	asylum-seekers	internally displaced people
WHERE?	OUTSIDE HIS/HER COUNTRY	OUTSIDE HIS/HER COUNTRY	OUTSIDE HIS/HER COUNTRY	INSIDE HIS/HER COUNTRY
WHY?	FLEEING DANGER (WAR, PERSECUTION)	FLEEING FOR OTHER REASONS	REASONS FOR FLEEING NOT CLEAR YET	FLEEING DANGER (WAR, PERSECUTION)
RETURN?	IN DANGER IF RETURNED	COULD RETURN (NO IMMEDIATE DANGER)	DEPENDS ON OUTCOME PROCEDURE	IN DANGER IF RETURNED
RIGHTS?	CANNOT BE RETURNED	DEPENDS ON MIGRATION LAWS	DEPENDS ON OUTCOME PROCEDURE	STILL UNDER LOCAL LAWS / AUTHORITY

STEP 2 - FACTS MATTER

Refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced people can be found in countries all over the world. Providing aid to them and hosting them is a global responsibility shared by many States and organizations. It is therefore important that you understand refugee numbers and facts and figures on a **global level first and then on a local level**. This allows you to bring the topic closer to home for your students.



Forcibly displaced people are distributed very unevenly around the world. You may be surprised by the large numbers of refugees some countries or regions continue to welcome and host despite stretched resources, while in others with far lower numbers there are debates about providing even basic aid and international protection to refugees.

Objective information from reliable sources will put the situation of refugees in the right perspective for your students.

It is therefore important that you use **correct and recent data** on forced displacement and that you present this data in an age-appropriate way.

The data included in the Teaching About Refugees teaching materials is compiled and verified by UNHCR and is updated regularly to reflect the global situation of forced displacement as accurately as possible.

Key questions to keep in mind when teaching this topic

1. Where do most forcibly displaced people **come from**?
2. Where do they **go**?

WHERE DO REFUGEES COME FROM?



The world is witnessing an unprecedented crisis of displacement. The number of people affected by forced displacement (refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced persons) globally has *doubled* from around 41 million in 2011 to over 82 million in 2020. These are the highest levels of forced displacement since the end of WW II.

But how did we get there?

In the second decade of the 21st century, a majority of the world's refugees have consistently originated from a relatively small number of countries that have been affected by conflict or violence for years or even decades, such as Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, South Sudan and Yemen. The top five countries of origin accounted for roughly *two thirds* of the world's refugees in recent years.

Many of these 'old' conflicts are not yet resolved and may still be ongoing or even flaring up at times, producing new movements of refugees. In addition to these long-standing refugee emergencies, relatively new conflicts have caused mass forced displacement from countries like Myanmar and Venezuela.

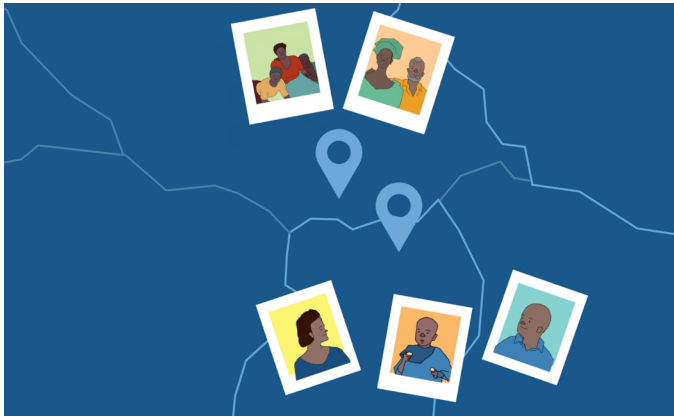
What to keep in mind when teaching about where refugees come from

When teaching facts and figures about forced displacement it is important that you instruct students about:

The **global scale** of the challenge of forced displacement and how it has evolved to the current peak. The number of forcibly displaced people stands at historically high levels.

The **relatively small group of top countries of origin of refugees** according to the most recent data available in 2021.

WHERE DO REFUGEES GO?



In some host communities, the perception is that there are too many refugees and that the capacity to host refugees is being stretched or surpassed.

Refugee statistics, however, put the distribution of the world's population of displaced people in the right perspective and can **debunk persistent myths** about refugees.

Here are a couple of key facts you can use to put global refugee movements into perspective, which you can illustrate with the facts and figures provided in the Teaching About Refugees teaching materials.

What to keep in mind when teaching about where refugees go

The majority of people who were forced to flee are still inside their own country. They are internally displaced and are not being hosted outside of their own country. In recent years, there were consistently around twice as much internally displaced people than refugees in the world.

The vast majority of the world's refugees are hosted in developing countries, not in industrialized countries. The percentage of refugees hosted in developing countries has been close to 90% in recent years. That means that only around one in ten refugees are in industrialized host countries and regions.

Neighbouring countries host the most refugees. Most refugees can be found in countries neighbouring their own country. Many do not want to travel far in the hope to return soon when the situation in their country becomes safe again. Many also lack the resources or physical ability to undertake perilous journeys to countries further away.

Asylum-seekers make up a small portion of the world's forcibly displaced. The number of people whose application for asylum in another country has not been processed yet is small compared to the numbers of refugees and internally displaced people.

REFUGEES IN MY COMMUNITY



Global figures about people who are forcibly displaced may seem abstract to your students.

It may be worth doing some research to include more **local facts and figures** about refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons and migrants in your country or region. This will allow you to bring the topic closer to home.

Keep in mind that this kind of data is not always available. Also make sure that whatever data you can find is recent and correct. **Scrutinize your sources and apply your media literacy skills** to determine the *who*, *what* and *why* of sources publishing figures on forced displacement in your community.

Also look for facts like where the local population of displaced people comes from, which services are provided to them and where your local asylum office is.

Reliable data sources on forced displacement in your community can include the local asylum authorities, relevant ministries and international organizations like UNHCR and local authorities. Academics and non-governmental organizations may publish relevant materials, too.

Be extra careful with sources that are not easy to verify such as social media posts and other on-line resources.



Facts matter: on-line materials

To learn more about basic terminology, look through the [Words Matter section](#) of the Teaching About Refugees web page and watch the [animations](#) on each topic.

unhcr.org/teaching-about-refugees.html#facts



LESSON PREPARATION: Make a fact sheet

When preparing for your lessons it may be a good idea to keep a few key facts and figures in the back of your head in case your students have questions. These facts and figures can also come in handy when you are discussing ideas and statements that may be factually incorrect.

Make a list of surprising facts

Before planning your lessons take note of facts and figures that may have *surprised* you. Look at the global and local numbers of refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs and stateless persons. Remember the definitions in the Words Matter section and look at the facts and figures again. Try and think about where people are, why they have moved and what rights they have. Did any of the figures surprise you?

Make a list of potential misunderstandings and prejudices

Next, make a list of facts and figures you think may have been misunderstood by your students. How many refugees did they think there are in the world today? Where did they think most came from? Where do students think they go?

Think about ways you can introduce fact-based learning about the topic in your lesson plans

Note which prejudices or misconceptions are contradicted by the facts and figures. Are your students over-estimating or under-estimating some of the numbers? Do they have any knowledge about countries of origin of displaced people? Do they know which rights displaced people have?



STEP 3 - STORIES MATTER



Screenshot of the Teaching About Refugees video '[Omar's story](#)'
© 2017 UNHCR/Daniel Demoustier

Words, facts and figures are often not enough to bring the experiences of forcibly displaced people to life in an educational setting. That is why we recommend you **include at least some refugee stories** in your lesson planning.

What to keep in mind when selecting storytelling materials for your lessons

Check your sources

When looking for and selecting videos, articles and other materials, again make sure to apply your media literacy skills and only use refugee stories that are *genuine* and that come from reliable sources.

Age-appropriate materials only

Be careful with the materials you present to your students. The materials should always be age-appropriate. Make sure not to show or describe scenes that may cause distress to younger children.

Adapt the complexity to your target group

Also make sure the stories are not too complex for the age group you are teaching. A good method is also to show stories students can relate to either because characters are the same age as them or because they share the same interests.

Check copyrights

Some materials may be under strict copyright rules and cannot be used even as teaching material. Make sure to check if your sources of material allow you to use the materials in lessons.



Try and use stories that shed light on following topics

The reasons people flee and which dangers they were facing in their country or home environment when they decided to flee. Was there a war? Were they being persecuted? Was there violence?

The journey to safety. Leaving your house and getting to safety, or to a safer place in another country can be full of dangers. How do people travel when they flee? Did they walk or take a car? Did they have to pay a smuggler to get out because it was not otherwise possible? How did they survive during the journey? What were they feeling?

The arrival in a host community. Once the journey is over and when they have arrived in their new country or location, many refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced people face uncertainties about the future. Many have trouble making a living for themselves. They need to adapt to new languages, cultures and customs. How are they living now? What are their feelings about their new environment?



Stories matter: on-line materials

For inspiration on refugee stories look through the [Media materials section of the Teaching About Refugees web page](#) and select video materials on [UNHCR's YouTube channel](#).

unhcr.org/teaching-about-refugees.html#media

If you do not have the time to look for appropriate materials, we recommend using the video exercises in the [Age-appropriate teaching materials section](#).

unhcr.org/teaching-about-refugees.html#materials

STEP 4 - TEACHING WITH REFUGEES

Because of the global displacement crisis more and more teachers and schools are welcoming refugees in their classrooms. Teaching displaced learners often presents teachers with new and unique challenges. Keep these challenges in mind when you are teaching displaced learners, whatever grade they may be in.



The challenge of assessment. Many displaced children and young people have missed out on education as a result of displacement. Some may not have gone to school for many years, if at all.

Making a thorough academic assessment of foundational skills like literacy and numeracy and knowledge of commonly taught subjects will help your school or teaching facility place children in the right grade. Assessments will also help determine whether children have additional needs such as catch-up education, accelerated education or even basic literacy and numeracy education. Literacy may also be an issue if children have learned to read and write in a different script.

Make sure you *get to know as much as you can* about the displaced learners that may attend your classes. If possible, read through their school files and discuss within the appropriate settings in your school or teaching facility. Always follow your school or teaching facility's protocols on assessment and placement of students.

The challenge of language. Most displaced learners will have to learn the language of the host community before they can start learning again in their new environment. In many countries and regions where language barriers exist, schools and education authorities put displaced learners through intensive language learning courses before they are placed in regular classes.

These can be provided by specialized teachers in additional curriculum or in non-formal education, but in many cases displaced learners are first receiving language education in partially or wholly separated preparatory classes or '*welcome classes*'.

Regardless of the system of welcome classes or language education applied in your school, displaced learners will eventually end up in regular classes, where they may continue to face certain challenges because they are still in the process of perfecting their knowledge of the language.

As a teacher of displaced learners, it is important to know a few basics about language learning.

Learning a language well enough to be able to learn in the language takes a very long time. It is important that you know the difference between learners who *seem* to understand and those who *truly* understand what you are trying to teach them. Introducing teaching techniques to evaluate deeper understanding of a subject may be useful.

The challenge of adapting to a new environment. Keep in mind that displaced children may come from countries with vastly different educational cultures with different teaching schedules, curriculum, customs and studying and evaluation methods. This needs to be taken into account when they are assessed and included in preparatory classes and regular classes.

A lot of misunderstandings can be avoided by offering displaced students as much information as possible about school life and to organize whole-school activities aimed at welcoming the new children into the classes (cf. co-creation of 'guides' for new children, activities aimed at knowing each other's names in different languages, creating opportunities to meet in a non-learning setting at the school). Involving parents and siblings in this process can be a good idea if they are willing to participate in school activities.

The challenge of stress and mental health. Many displaced children have experienced distressing events. They may have been exposed to violence and abuse in their country of origin. Many have experienced perilous journeys to a safe country, often at the hands of smugglers and at risk of their life. This may have caused them great stress or caused severe mental health disorders such as Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

An often overlooked source of stress or trauma are the *living conditions of displaced children after arrival in a host country*. Many spend a considerable amount of time in reception facilities for refugees and asylum-seekers

(camps, collective temporary housing facilities) where living conditions can be challenging. In many locations people live close together with little to no privacy and often no appropriate spaces to study or do homework assignments. Many displaced learners live in facilities or sub-standard housing with very few resources. This can lead to frustration, irritation and, in the worst case, violence and abuse.

These experiences can cause deep disruptions in children's ability to learn. If they suffer from stress or mental health problems, they will not be capable of focusing on what they need to learn. Their behaviour may also negatively affect the learning environment in your classroom and cause disruptions to other students' learning and well-being.

As a teacher you obviously always need to leave treatment of children and young people suffering from stress or trauma to mental health professionals. *Teachers are no therapists*. It helps, however, to have at least some basic knowledge of potential symptoms of stress or trauma. This will allow you to make informed decisions on whether or not it is appropriate to seek support or professional mental health counselling.

Many, if not the majority, mental health problems of displaced learners will get better when they are introduced to the safe and constructive learning environment of a school. But you need to be prepared to intervene when problems do arise.

How to manage challenges related to the presence of displaced learners in your classroom

During teaching terms, it is important that you use existing protocols and feedback possibilities and mobilize your school's leadership to adapt teaching programmes for displaced learners if needed. This will contribute to displaced learners' well-being and increase their chances of succeeding academically.



Teaching with refugees: on-line materials

To finish this chapter, look through the [Including refugees in your classroom section](#) of the Teaching About Refugees web page.

Read through [UNHCR's language acquisition guide](#) to learn more about what to expect from displaced language learners.

Also read some background on stress and trauma in [UNHCR's guide for teachers on stress and trauma](#), as well as the [theoretical materials provided by the Harvard Center on the Developing Child](#).

unhcr.org/teaching-about-refugees.html#including

Methods on bridging cultural barriers and welcoming newcomers in your school using a whole-school approach are included in the school activity guides in the [Age-appropriate teaching materials section](#).

unhcr.org/teaching-about-refugees.html#materials

If you do not have the time to look for appropriate materials, we recommend using the video exercises in the [Age-appropriate teaching materials section](#).

unhcr.org/teaching-about-refugees.html#materials

STEP 5 - PUTTING A LESSON PLAN TOGETHER



Match lesson plans with curriculum

When you are planning for your lessons, it is imperative that you do not deviate from the curriculum and the subjects that you are expected to teach in your specific context. The materials offered in the Teaching About Refugees teaching materials collection are designed to be used as flexibly as possible and can be added to a variety of lesson plans.

Create a tailor-made teaching resource catalogue

We would also encourage you to not exclusively rely on Teaching About Refugees teaching materials if your lesson planning calls for it. For example, when you are also teaching about human rights in the same lesson cycle.

Teachers are very creative in choosing and designing the best teaching methods for their specific group of students. They should combine the best available materials in their teaching on subjects like refugees, asylum and migration, on condition that what they present to students is accurate, fact-based and age-appropriate.



To help you in your lesson planning, we have included an easy-to-use lesson plan template in Word format. Download this template if you think it can be of use. Adapt it as you see fit to prepare for your lessons.

The lesson plan template is available for download on the [Teaching Teaching About Refugees web page](https://www.unhcr.org/teaching-about-refugees.html#lesson). Note that you can alter this template as you see fit (no copyright restrictions).

[unhcr.org/teaching-about-refugees.html#lesson](https://www.unhcr.org/teaching-about-refugees.html#lesson)

STEP 6 - TAKING ACTION



Many schools and teaching facilities have a tradition of taking action to help people in their community and participate in charity, volunteering or service-learning. Taking action to help refugees in your community could be a good way to move your students, their parents and others to set up local initiatives. These initiatives can then be linked to activities on teaching *about* refugees and *with* refugees or other displaced people.

Think local

Before you undertake action with your students or your school to help displaced people, we would recommend you reach out to local organizations of displaced people or to local organizations that provide assistance to displaced people in your community.

They will be able to tell you what their needs are and how you can best take action that directly corresponds to those needs. This will avoid you taking initiatives that may not be as effective as you would want them to be.

An obvious start is for you to check if there are any *locations in your community where refugees or asylum-seekers live* (cf. an asylum-seeker reception facility, a local refugee sports club, an informal language learning class). Ask management or residents in those locations if they are open to work with your school and start your initiative.

Think age-appropriate

Make sure you always work in an age-appropriate manner and in a manner that benefits both your students and the displaced people you will be working with.



Taking action to help refugees: on-line materials

You can find inspiration for activities in the school activity guides in the collection of [Age-appropriate teaching materials](#) on the Teaching About Refugees web page.

unhcr.org/teaching-about-refugees.html#materials

To find out more about the individuals and organizations providing assistance to refugees and other displaced people, watch the animation [Who helps refugees?](#) in the Words Matter section of the Teaching About Refugees web page.

unhcr.org/teaching-about-refugees.html#words

GUIDE FOR TEACHERS



Teaching About Refugees

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This guide is a complementary publication to UNHCR's
Teaching About Refugees website:
<https://www.unhcr.org/teaching-about-refugees.html>

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Teaching About Refugees teaching materials developed by
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Additional graphics from Adobe Stock

Video stories produced by
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