

Supporting Immigrants in Schools Video Series

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MODULE

Refugees and Immigrants in Schools

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City University of New York-Initiative on Immigration and Education (CUNY-IIE),
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Dear Educator,

Whatever your area of certification, grade level, or position, you have the power and opportunity to educate yourself, your colleagues, and your students about current immigration issues. These issues impact the freedoms, fears, hopes and futures of our students and families, and ultimately, of our nation. The City University of New York-Initiative on Immigration and Education (CUNY-IIE) aims to bring together educators, researchers, families and local leaders to **learn** about, from, and with immigrant communities, **act** in ways that center our shared humanity regardless of legal status, and **advocate** for equitable policies and opportunities. These professional development activities are one way we hope to achieve this vision.

The [Supporting Immigrants in Schools](#) video series was created in 2019, at the request of the New York State Education Department (NYSED), to show what some schools across the state are doing to respond to the current political context where immigrant communities are under attack. We hope you find these short videos insightful. But to truly effect change, the ideas the videos describe must become everyday actions in our classrooms, schools, and communities. For that reason, these four professional development modules to accompany each video have been created through the collaboration of K-12 teachers, school administrators, professors, and doctoral students.

These modules will be shared with schools and educators across New York. We are also making them available to educators nationally. The modules should not be viewed as a scripted series of professional development activities. Instead, we encourage schools to hold listening sessions with their local immigrant communities and/or to carve out spaces during class time, at family conferences and community events, to learn directly about the experiences, hopes, and fears of immigrant-origin students and families. Based on the information you collect in your own local context, the activities within the modules can be selected and modified.

We realize that time for professional development is scarce; therefore, you can take an 'à la carte' approach to the activities based on your needs and timeframe. While we have included tips for facilitation, we strongly recommend that facilitators and participants begin by reading the CUNY-IIE Guiding Principles document that follows this letter in order to ground the activities in a stance of immigrant justice.

If you use these modules, we at info@cuny-iae.org would love to hear about your actions, reactions, and your aha-moments. We thank you for taking the time to learn, listen, and educate yourself and your peers. Immigration is an issue for everyone, and we hope these professional development modules can support the learning process for schools in New York and beyond.



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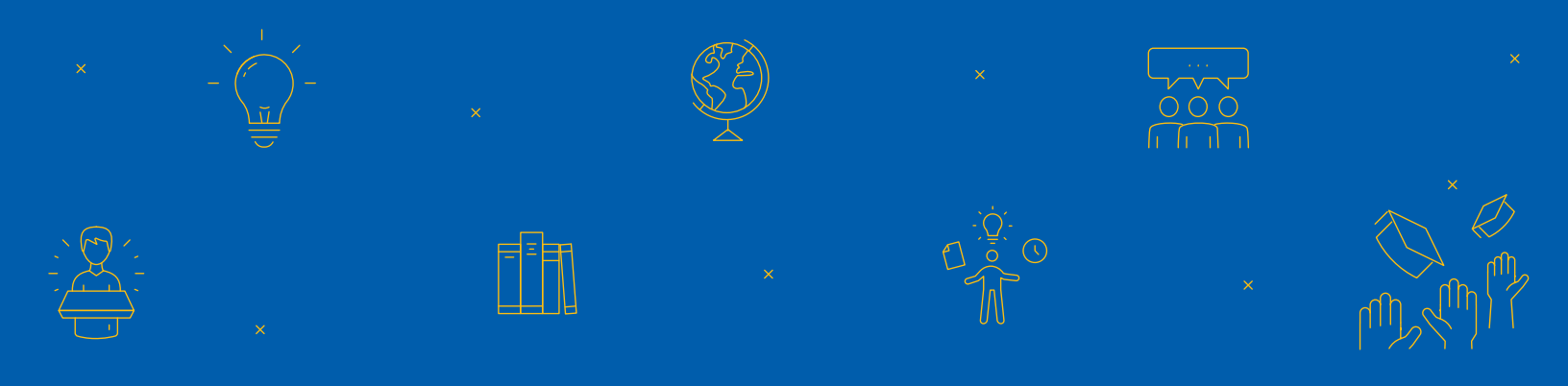
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Supporting Immigrants in Schools Video Series

Videos	Professional Development
Key Immigration Issues	Cecilia M. Espinosa, Bridgit Bye, Isabel Mendoza
Refugees and Immigrants in Schools	Tamara O. Alsace, Adeyinka M. Akinsulure-Smith, Gliset Colón
Immigration in Elementary Schools	Dina López, Ashley Busone Rodríguez, Jessica Velez Tello
Immigration in Secondary Schools	Daicy Diaz-Granados, Angely Li Zheng, Chaewon Park, Jennifer (Jenna) Queenan, Karen Zaino
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Table of Contents

CUNY-IIE Grounding Principles7

Context Overview: Refugees and Immigrants in Schools..... 10

Activities

Activity 1: Anticipation Guide for Refugees and Immigrants in Schools Video 16

Activity 2: Looking beyond stereotypes: Who are refugees? 19

Activity 3: Polyglot Posters..... 23

Activity 4: The Games People Play 26

Activity 5: The Poet Inside You 30

Activity 6: Unique Needs of Refugee Students--Case Study Analysis 34

Activity 7: Community Resource List 38

Activity 8: Funds of Knowledge 41

Activity 9: Perspectives through Art 45

Activity 10: Counter Storytelling 49

Appendix

Activity 1: Anticipation Guide 52

Activity 1: Alternative Format - True/False Quiz..... 53

Activity 1: Sample Statements and Example Responses 55

Activity 2: Images of Refugees..... 58

Activity 2: Key for Images of Refugees 60

Activity 4: Poem Templates..... 61

Activity 5: Examples of poems written by refugees about the refugee experience 63

Activity 6: Case Study 64

Activity 6: Resources & References 65

Activity 8: Funds of Knowledge Worksheet..... 67

Activity 8: Funds of Knowledge - Stories of Refugees 68

Activity 9: Artwork Created by Refugees 72

Activity 10: Counter Storytelling 74

Author Bios75

Support Personnel Bios76

Resource Links.....77

CUNY-IIE

Grounding Principles

Cynthia Nayeli Carvajal, Ph.D.

City University of New York-Initiative on Immigration and Education (CUNY-IIE)

The work of CUNY-IIE is firmly grounded in a set of principles, all of which reflect several overlapping themes that inform our thinking and our work. One of our primary goals is to **learn** about and understand the experience of migration, from the point of view of immigrants themselves. We seek also to be cognizant of the history of this country, which was founded with lofty ideals but in reality was built on the twin pillars of slavery and the dispossession of Native peoples. Confronting some of these ideas may feel uncomfortable at times, but we believe that discomfort is often a necessary part of learning for all of us. Lastly, as part of our goals to **act** and **advocate**, these principles address stances that educators can take as we all strive to center our shared humanity and build toward equitable policies and educational opportunities for all.

Black Immigrant Lives Matter. CUNY-IIE stands in solidarity with all those fighting for equality and justice in the Black Lives Matter movement. It is therefore important to approach this work with that sense of solidarity in mind. Although [black immigrants](#) make up the smallest percentage of immigrants in the United States, they are more likely to be targeted for deportation. By centering the lives and experiences of those who are most vulnerable, we can advocate for equality for everyone.

No one is illegal on stolen land. We believe that no person should be defined in terms of their immigration status, and we are opposed to the dehumanization of anyone through the use of the term 'illegal'. This notion is further complicated by the history of colonization in the United States. New York State resides on [lands stolen from Native people](#): Lenape, Haudenosaunee, Mohican, Abenaki, Erie, Canarsie, Rockaway, Algonquin, Merrick, Massepequas, Matinecock, Nissaquogues, Setaukets, Corchaug, Secatogue, Unkechaug, Shinnecock, Montaukett, and Mannansett.

We are not all immigrants. The fabric of the US includes not only immigrants, but also the Native Americans whose land was stolen in the creation of this country, as well as the descendants of enslaved people who were brought to this land against their will. We refrain from statements like "we are all immigrants" and "this nation was built by immigrants," because this further invisibilizes the Native people and lived realities of slavery and the Black experience in the United States.

The immigrant experience exists beyond the Latinx narrative. The rhetoric on immigrant rights in the United States often centers Latinx communities, and specifically the Mexican experience. In fact, the immigrant experience in the US encompasses many countries, races, and ethnicities. As we seek to advocate for equitable opportunities for all immigrants in the New York context, it is vitally important to recognize and make space for immigrants outside the Latinx diaspora.

Immigrants and students labeled as “English Language Learners” are not interchangeable. Approximately half of all multilingual learners in New York are US-born, many of whom grow up in multilingual homes and require additional support to learn English via bilingual education or English as a New Language (ENL) programs. In addition, many immigrants arrive from English-speaking countries and/or are already bilingual. Ideally, all students - and especially those who speak a home language other than English - will be given the opportunity to become bilingual and biliterate in school. It is important that we not conflate the two distinct (though overlapping) categories of students who are immigrant-origin with students who are categorized as English Language Learners.

The immigration experience is complicated. Reasons for migrating to the US vary among individuals and families, but leaving one’s home, family, language and culture is often traumatic. And even though some immigrants come to the US for economic opportunity, financial issues may continue to be a challenge for new immigrants. Nevertheless, mainstream rhetoric upholds the narrative that immigrants are happier to be in the US than in their home country. This perception is reinforced by messages extolling assimilation and patriotism. However, in addition to other challenges, immigrants are often treated like second-class citizens or denied citizenship altogether; immigrants also experience violent laws and policing practices that often make the US a hostile space for immigrants.

Migration can be traumatic. Our work recognizes that the experience of migration through militarized borders can be difficult and painful. While there is a vibrant Migration is Beautiful movement often symbolized with the imagery of a butterfly, we must recognize that students’ and community members’ experiences with migration may have been traumatic. We wish to understand and recognize these experiences by incorporating mental health resources and socioemotional support in our work.

Xenophobia is systemic. Anti-immigrant discourse has blamed immigrants for a broken economy, failing schools, and for overwhelmed medical resources. [Research](#) has [continually](#) shown that immigrants don’t have a negative impact on any of these services. In fact, immigrants often provide a positive impact, both socially and economically. Immigrants are vilified because

xenophobia, much like racism, is a systemic issue in the US as a result, immigrant students often have less [economic mobility](#), attend [under-resourced schools](#), and are provided with fewer social services.

Teaching through translanguaging is central. We believe the home language practices of immigrant-origin students, which include different languages and varieties, are a strength that must be a part of their education. Translanguaging pedagogy, which deliberately integrates flexible language practices into education, allows for students' voices and learning opportunities across programs, content areas and levels. All instruction should draw on students' many linguistic resources, regardless of whether they have been labeled as English Language Learners.

We aim to move beyond allyship to working as accomplices. Our work seeks to provide opportunities for educators to engage as allies, and to move from [ally work to accomplice work](#). An ally engages in activism by standing with an individual or group in a marginalized community; an accomplice focuses on dismantling the structures that oppress that individual or group—and such work will be directed by the stakeholders in the marginalized group. As we continue to educate ourselves and others, our work seeks to develop allyship while also addressing and changing structures that impact immigrant students and communities.

Context Overview: Refugees and Immigrants in Schools

A *refugee* is a person who has been displaced from their home country because of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. There are currently about 26 million refugees worldwide according to the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNHCR, 2020), the organization that oversees refugee resettlement worldwide. Refugees are also referred to as *forced migrants*. While at first glance, voluntary and forced migrants appear to be similar, their experiences can differ in many ways (Akinsulure-Smith & O'Hara, 2012). An understanding of the realities of forced migrant groups can sensitize educators to the unique aspects of their experience and help to facilitate student learning in their new educational, cultural, and social setting.

According to the UNHCR, forced migration of people displaced by war, violence, or persecution has reached historic levels in recent years, numbering 70.8 million in 2019 (2020). Schools everywhere are enrolling refugee students from across the globe in record numbers, although resettlement in the United States has been curbed in the last few years by current government policies. It is critical that school communities learn about the circumstances faced by refugee children and their families so they are better prepared to welcome and educate this ever-growing and ever-changing student group.

Refugee Statistics in New York State

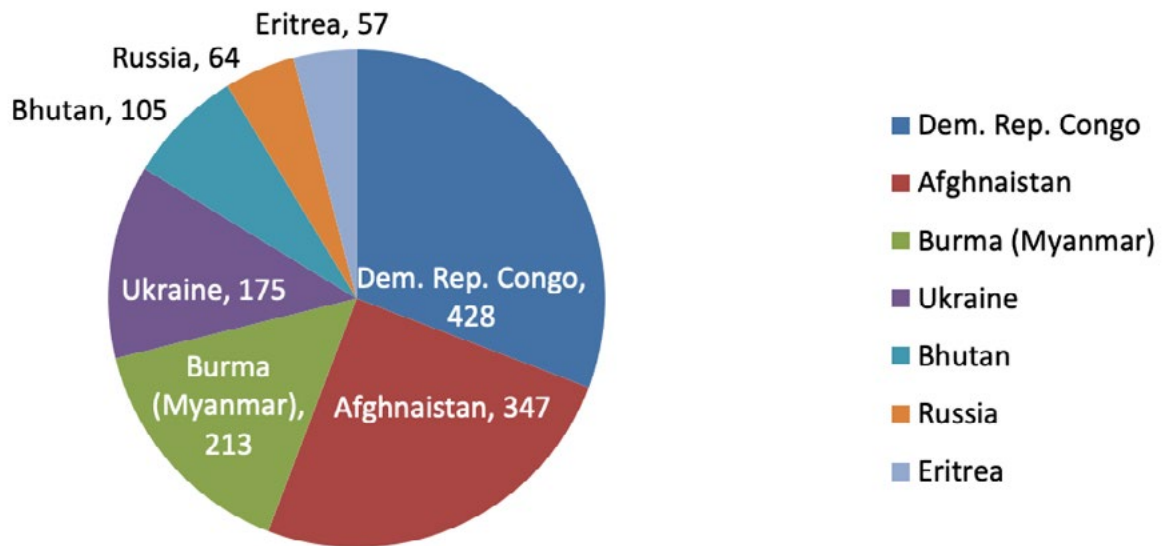
The number of refugees accepted each year into the US is set by the President. Historically, the US has resettled more refugees than any other country, but that was not the case under the Trump administration. Resettlement in the US has been declining while the number of displaced persons worldwide has been increasing. In 2018, New York was the 5th state in the country in terms of the number of refugees resettled (National Immigration Forum, 2019).

Refugees undergo a rigorous screening process that includes a series of in-depth interviews and background checks prior to being accepted into a resettlement program. Upon arrival in the US, they are assisted by a resettlement agency and their place of residence is determined by a number of factors such as cost of living, available housing and established communities from

the same country. These conditions, and an increased number of resettlement agencies in the northern part of New York State, have resulted in more refugees being resettled upstate. In fact, many upstate cities have sought out robust resettlement programs in order to reverse dwindling population trends and to revitalize their economies. A total of 1,281 refugees and 324 people with Special Immigrant Visas (SIVs) from Iraq and Afghanistan resettled in New York State in 2018. The breakdown across the regions of New York is as follows :

- Upstate New York: 1,139 refugees (89% of all refugees)
- New York City & Long Island: 142 refugees (11%)
- Upstate New York: 257 SIVs (79%)
- New York City & Long Island: 67 SIVs (21%) (Bureau of Refugee and Immigration Affairs)

Top 7 Countries of Origin for NYS Refugee/SIV Arrivals 2018

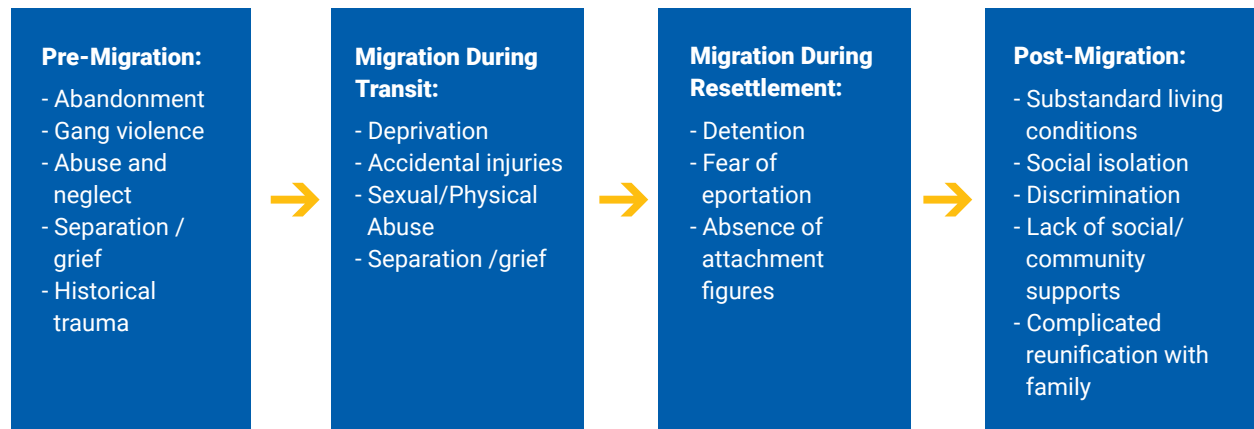


SOURCE: [BUREAU OF REFUGEE AND IMMIGRATION AFFAIRS](#)

Challenges Faced by Displaced Persons

Along with their forcible displacement, many refugees experience unexpected challenges and devastating losses. They may flee with few or no belongings and may not have been able to say goodbye to family and friends. Sources of their trauma include atrocities experienced directly or witnessed during armed conflict (ex. sexual violence, the death or disappearance of family and friends, use of force and torture by a repressive regime). Additionally, many have lived in refugee camps with scarce resources for years before settling in a host country. Schooling and educational resources vary greatly among refugee camps. In some camps the educational system is quite structured and relatively well resourced, while in others it may be sporadic or almost non-existent. Finally, the lengthy and traumatizing refugee experience may be further compounded by the same post-migration stressors that voluntary immigrants face, such as learning a new language and culture, adjusting to new gender and familial roles, accessing services, and learning new skills (Akinsulure-Smith & O'Hara, 2012; Tribe, 2002).

Refugees often experience several stages of psycho-emotional adjustment as they make their way along the path to their resettlement destination. Not all people experience every stage, and if they do may not follow the same chronological order, but the following figure depicts the typical sequence:



SOURCE: CASAS & NOROÑA (2014) AS CITED IN NOROÑA (2016, SLIDE 14).

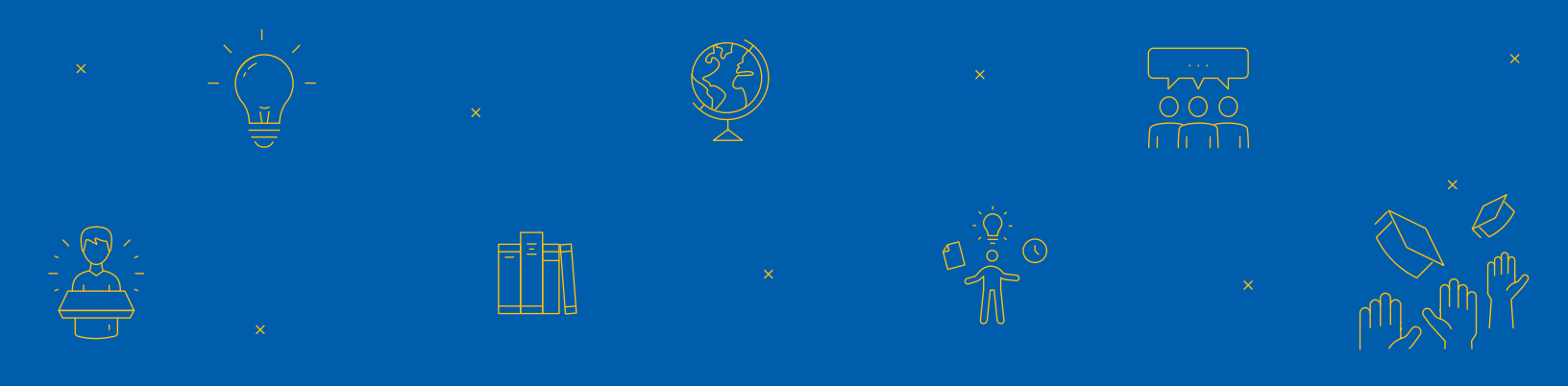
Anyone can be affected by trauma; however refugee experiences, by their very nature, have an increased likelihood of resulting in trauma. Students who arrive as refugees will have academic and social-emotional support needs that may differ from their peers. They may exhibit anxiety, wariness, withdrawal, disassociation, and other behavioral manifestations that indicate that they feel troubled. They may also act out, fight, argue, or have trouble concentrating or remembering

(Fazel & Stein, 2002; Lustig et. al., 2004). Teachers who are aware of this and responsive to it have a better chance of effectively teaching refugee students. While awareness of key indicators is the first step, educators also need strategies to respond to trauma and must know about available resources, especially when faced with a situation they are uncertain how to handle. Creating an environment of safety and security in the classroom is one of the keys to trauma-informed education (see Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators: National Child Traumatic Stress Network Schools Committee, 2008)






This module includes a variety of activities and experiences designed to raise awareness, understanding, empathy, and competence among educators to address the educator actions in the *Refugees and Immigrants in Schools* video. Most of the activities are adaptable for classroom use and can easily incorporate home language and translanguaging practices. The module is a step in the journey to better supporting refugee communities and also educating others about their experiences as well.

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KEY

	Time Frame for Activity
	Background Knowledge Activity Requires Introductory Intermediate Advanced
	Focus of Impact Student Faculty Classroom Family School Community
	Tips for Facilitators: Suggestions for ways to prepare for and approach the professional development activities, as well as areas to be aware of while facilitating the module.
	Classroom Connections: Possible ideas to differentiate the activity or content for classroom instruction with K-12 students.

Anticipation Guide for Refugees and Immigrants in Schools Video

 45–60 minutes  Introductory  Faculty

Overview

In order to understand the experience of refugee students and connect with them, it is helpful for educators to examine their own knowledge and biases about forced migrants. The **Anticipation Guide** will stimulate participants' interest in the topic and set a **purpose** for video watching. It can be used during and after watching to focus attention and promote reflection. In this activity, it helps set the stage for watching the video and reflecting on any preconceived notions and misconceptions about refugees.

Learning Goals

- ✓ Make **predictions** about the video, **anticipate** the content, and verify their predictions.
- ✓ Connect new information from the video to prior knowledge and **build** curiosity about the topic of educating refugees and immigrants.

Key Terminology

- **Asylum Seeker/Asylee:** An individual in the United States or at a port of entry who is afraid to return to their home country due to an actual or well founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. Applications for asylum take place in the US and are granted infrequently. Asylees are eligible to adjust to lawful permanent resident status after one year of continuous presence in the U.S.
- **Displaced Person:** An umbrella term that describes all people who have had to leave their homes as a result of a natural, technological, or deliberate event. This term includes refugees, asylees, and internally displaced persons.
- **Immigrant:** A person who leaves their country of origin to live in a new country.
- **Internally Displaced Person (IDP):** Someone forced to flee their home, but who has not crossed a national border to find safety. IDPs stay within their own country and remain

under the protection of their own government, even if that government is the reason for their displacement.

- **Refugee:** An individual who seeks to leave their country of origin and is unwilling or unable to return to it because of persecution or fear of persecution due to race, religion, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. A person who requests refugee status is still overseas until the country of placement is determined. Refugees are eligible to adjust to lawful permanent resident status after one year of continuous presence in the U.S.

Materials for Facilitator

- Statements on index cards (one per card)
- [Anticipation Guide](#)
- [Alternative Format - True/False Quiz](#) in appendix (alternative to index cards)
- [Sample Statements and Example Responses](#)
- Video—[Refugees and Immigrants in Schools](#)

Procedures

- **Before** watching the video, distribute the list of sample statements. (Alternatively, list the statements on chart paper or project them and assign randomly by choosing names, or use the “True/False” quiz found in the appendix.)



Tips for facilitators

Facilitators may come up with different statements depending on the group’s composition (age/grade, prior experience working with refugees, etc.).

- Ask participants (in pairs or small groups) to choose one or more of the statements at random and think about, then discuss, whether or not they agree/disagree with the statement and why.
 - Example statement (taken from handout in appendix): Refugees are happier in the US.
Example response: Families may have been forced to flee for reasons of safety, but still miss family, friends, and the life they left behind.
- Either individually or as a pair/group, ask them to complete the anticipation guide template (or jot down their thoughts in a notebook) and be prepared to share their responses and rationales.
- Facilitate a discussion of the statements, responses and rationales by asking pairs/groups to share their responses and encouraging others to ask questions to clarify or stretch their

thinking. Responses may vary greatly in their depth, sensitivity, and level of empathy. A skilled facilitator may paraphrase responses while working to elicit more responses that do not violate the facilitator tips included below. Example responses are provided in the handout, but are not meant to imply that this is an exhaustive list of “acceptable responses.”



Tips for facilitators

Often the refugee experience is confused with the experiences of other immigrant groups. Refugees come to the United States with a special immigration status that gives them automatic admission into the country. This status also provides them with a “green card” or a permit to work. Refugees are people who are forced from their home countries for a myriad of reasons in search of safety.

While the term “refugee” is used as an umbrella term to describe this population, it is really a legal term. There are other terms for forced migrants or displaced people, including asylee, asylum seeker, and internally displaced person (IDP). Some of these terms may come up during this activity. Please review the legal definitions in the collective glossary.

It is important to recognize that many refugees may have endured traumatic events during their search for safety. Given this reality, prior to or after watching this video, remind educators that their students may or may not want to share or discuss their immigration stories and they should not be forced to do so.

While the draw for educators might be to protect and/or save students, it’s important that they NOT make promises they cannot keep or control (ex. promises of protection or safety). Lastly, it is essential to recognize that despite the challenges and hardships faced by their refugee students, they bring many strengths and assets. They have endured much and demonstrate great resilience, endurance, creativity, and much more. The term “refugee” is a part of their experience but does not define them.

-
- During the video, participants jot down evidence to support or discredit their own claims.
 - **After** watching the [video](#), ask participants to revisit their responses and rationales. Discuss how their positions on facts about refugees may have changed (or not) after having watched the video. Ask them to cite the evidence they collected from the video.

Activity 2

Looking beyond stereotypes: Who are refugees?

 30 minutes  Introductory  Educators

Overview

To dispel biases about refugees and drawing from Shahnaz's words in the video, *"It doesn't matter where they come from, kids are just kids, they could be the future as well, even though they are refugees they could learn and could do better for your country as well,"* this activity examines assumptions about who refugees are and what contributions they can make to their new country.

Use this activity to engage participants in a discussion of who refugees are (including commonly held assumptions and stereotypes), why they come, and what they can contribute in contrast to the negative rhetoric of who they are and what they take.

Video Educator Actions

- Create spaces for students to share their immigration stories
- Learn about students' education and cultural backgrounds: Learn about students' experiences as refugees

Learning Goals

- ✓ **Dispel myths and misconceptions** about refugees, highlighting meaningful contributions they can make to their new countries.

Key Terminology

- **Asylum Seeker:** An individual in the United States or at a port of entry who is afraid to return to their home country due to an actual or well founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. Applications for asylum take place in the US and are granted infrequently. Asylees are eligible to adjust to lawful permanent resident status after one year of continuous presence in the US.

- **Humanitarian Visa:** A visa that allows a person to become a lawful permanent resident because they suffered some harm or were a victim of a crime. The most common humanitarian visas include the following statuses; refugee, asylee, Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) self-petitioner, T visa for a victim of human trafficking, U visa for a crime victim, or special immigrant juvenile status (SIJ) for minors who have been abused, neglected or abandoned by a parent.
- **Internally Displaced Person (IDP):** Someone forced to flee their home, but who has not crossed a national border to find safety. IDPs stay within their own country and remain under the jurisdiction of their own government, even if that government is the reason for their displacement.
- **Refugee:** An individual who seeks to leave their country of origin and is unwilling or unable to return to it because of persecution or fear of persecution due to race, religion, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. A person who requests refugee status is still overseas until the country of placement is determined. Refugees are eligible to adjust to lawful permanent resident status after one year of continuous presence in the US.
- **Undocumented/Unauthorized Immigrant:** A foreign-born person who does not have a legal right to be or remain in the United States. One can be undocumented either by entering the country without US government permission or by overstaying a visa that has expired.

Materials for Facilitator

- [Images of Refugees](#)
- [Key for Images of Refugees](#)

Additional Resources

- <https://www.rescue.org/article/famous-refugees>
- <https://www.globalgiving.org/learn/listicle/13-powerful-refugee-stories/>
- [Supporting Immigrants in Schools Resource Guide](#): Immigration Book List

Procedure

- Hand out the Images of Refugees sheet (or project on screen) to participants. Invite them to take a few minutes to jot down answers to the following questions about each image:
 - Who is this person?
 - What might be some reasons for this individual’s migration?
 - Guess what contributions they made to their new home country



Tips for Facilitators

Refugee is a formal category that results from forced migration tied to persecution. This is sometimes different from other immigrant groups. However, there are immigrants who do not have the ability to migrate with permission and enter the US without inspection, often seeking asylum upon arrival to the US. This experience is also a form of forced migration whether it's from economic turmoil or violence in their country of origin.

All leave their countries in search of safety. While the term “refugee” is used as an umbrella term to describe this population, it is really a legal term. There are other terms for forced migrants, including asylum seeker/asylee, internally displaced person, those on humanitarian visas and undocumented immigrant. Please see the accompanying glossary for the definitions of important terminology.

- Invite participants to take a few minutes to share their answers with their elbow partners.
- After about 10 minutes, share the answers with participants and move to larger group discussion.
 - Discussion Round 1: What were their answers? What did they base their answers on? How did their assumptions about refugees influence their answers? Can participants identify refugees they know of within the community?
 - Discussion Round 2: What about the refugee students in their classrooms? What do they know about them? What don't they know? What have they been assuming? What can we learn from our students, and what can our students learn from each other?



Tip for Facilitators

Although the refugees in these pictures are well known and have made significant contributions to their new home countries (and some to the world), there are many ways that refugees can make important contributions to their new countries from working in key industries (including farming, health care, janitorial, education, the arts, business, and food services) to serving as informal cultural liaisons within their communities. These images serve to provide a jumping off point.

In the discussion, emphasize that these “contributions” can be big and small and varied. Highlight the fact that refugees come from all over the world and resettled in many different nations as well. Discuss their reasons for migration—they HAD to leave and they CAN'T go back!

Remind participants to be mindful of sharing the immigration status of students in the classroom or school without their consent.

- End with the quote from Shanaz, 7th grader in the video: *“It doesn’t matter where they come from, kids are just kids, they could be the future as well, even though they are refugees they could learn and could do better for your country as well.”* Ask participants to describe how this quote resonates with the discussion and their various approaches to teaching their own students.



Classroom Connection: Who Are Refugees?

Create opportunities for all students to learn about the refugee experience in ways that do not require students who are refugees to share their stories. One approach is to provide detailed information about two or three of the refugee journeys from these list or another refugee story: [Famous Refugees](#) , [Powerful Refugee Stories](#)

Ask students to conduct detailed research about that individual, and then present what they learn in class, using whatever medium they choose (allow for their creativity—storytelling, song, art, etc.).

Invite students to compare and contrast their chosen refugees’ experience and journey with someone in their family. Encourage them to write, draw, or audio record their journey in whatever language or languages they choose. If a picture of them could be included in this montage, what would the picture of them show? What contributions do they hope to make to their new country?

Engage non-refugee students by inviting them to explore migration within their own families. Or if their family does not have a migration history, they do not have access to this information or is it too painful to uncover they can select another known immigrant to contrast. They can investigate: What was their experience? How similar or different was that experience from the refugee they researched?

The teacher can draw out themes such as reasons for migration, where they migrated from, how many stops there were along the way. The class can also pursue larger themes such as: What was left behind/lost? What was gained?

Activity 3

Polyglot Posters

 60–90 minutes  Introductory / Intermediate  Faculty

Overview

Not all educators are **polyglots**, or speakers of many languages, so communicating with students and families who speak languages with which they are not familiar can be a challenge. Bridging linguistic differences is a skill that begins with the desire to communicate. One way to achieve better communication, build relationships, and promote empathy is by learning about the languages spoken by the learners in the school and how to say at least a few words in those languages.

Video Educator Actions

- Visibly show families they are welcome
- Engage families as valued members of the school community
- Allow students to express themselves through their home languages
- Learn about students' education and cultural backgrounds

Learning Goals

- ✓ Process content from the video by focusing on particular educator actions regarding the use of the students' and families' home languages.
- ✓ Apply information presented in the video in their own pedagogical practices.

Key Terminology

- **Translanguaging:** Translanguaging centers the communication practices of bilingual or multilingual individuals, rather than viewing them from a monolingual lens. When bilinguals translanguage, they use their full linguistic repertoire without regard for who/what/when/where society tells them they can speak a named language such as Garifuna or Cantonese.

Materials for Facilitator

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Laptops or tablets with internet access
- [NYS Refugee Data 2018](#)

Reference Materials

- [The Languages of New York State: A CUNY-NYSIEB Guide for Educators](#)
- [The Online Encyclopedia of Languages and Writing Systems](#)
- [Translanguaging: A CUNY-NYSIEB Guide for Educators](#)

Procedures

- **Introduction:** Ask participants to consider a time that they felt welcomed in a new setting. What role did shared language play in that experience? Were there common jokes, ways of greeting, and/or terminology that facilitated a sense of welcoming? Participants can share in pairs or with the larger group before transitioning to the primary activity.
- **Review** the first group of educator actions presented in the video. Discuss ways in which educators make families feel welcome, how they incorporate their home languages, and why it's important to do so.
 - This is a perfect time for a **think, pair, share**. **Think** about your response, **pair** up with an elbow partner, **share** your ideas with the partner.
- **Present** the data on numbers of refugees and the top languages spoken by refugees in New York State (see materials list, above).
- Provide an opportunity for participants to ask questions and share what they know about these languages. Note questions that may require additional research.
- Introduce the terminology *polyglot*, *translanguaging*, and the reference materials available to them.
- Discuss how these practices help students understand more about their home language and English and how they normalize the practices of bilinguals or multilinguals. Describe how contrastive analysis of English with other languages accelerates and enhances learning of multiple languages.
- Ask the educators to select one of the languages spoken by their own students or one they're interested in learning more about (try to limit groups to 3-4 for each language). Present **the task**. Ask group members to decide who will do what. All participants will do

research and there will be one recorder, one artist, one fact checker/editor, and one or more presenters.

- **The Task:** As a group, use the suggested reference materials to research one of the languages spoken by the refugee students and/or community members in your school, community, city, or state. Find interesting and fun facts to create a poster you will use to teach the rest of the group about the language. Include some of these ideas:
 - Where the language is spoken
 - How many speakers worldwide
 - How is it written (type of script, ex. Cyrillic)
 - Some useful words such as welcome, hello, goodbye, teacher, friend, numbers, colors
 - Some fun facts: longest word, cognates with English, words English borrowed, idioms, etc.
 - Common phrases
 - Video or audio link to hear the language.
 - Prepare a brief presentation to share the information learned, using the poster as a visual aide.
- Groups present their mini-lessons and display the poster for others to use/duplicate/ photograph as a resource in the future. These posters could be shared in the school or district through a shared drive or website.



Classroom Connection: Polyglot Posters

Students could do a class project individually or in small groups to research languages spoken by their peers in the school as well as in the community. They could select a language that they do not know, as a way to explain their linguistic awareness. Students who are speakers of specific languages could serve as first-hand sources to groups who are conducting the research.

Tip for Educators: Don't presume that students who speak another language will know how to read and write it. Also, some languages are not written and some students may speak different varieties of the same language. All students may need some guidance and support to get started and complete the activity. This activity can be simplified for use with younger students and families. Resources such as multilingual aides and cultural liaisons can help.

Activity 4

The Games People Play

 45–60 minutes  Introductory  Teachers, Administrators, and other School Personnel

Overview

An aspect of culture that families across the world may share are their ways of passing information and traditions from one generation to the next. One way this is accomplished is through play. This activity draws on the games, rhymes, and childhood pastimes that people may remember and take with them through the years and across the miles. Play is enacted differently in different cultures, places, and across socio-economic strata. But having fun together as families and/or communities is universal. Exploring the ways children play in different cultures is a way for educators to get to know more about the students, their families, and their customs. For the families, it's a way to share something they brought with them from home as a way to begin to address the trauma related to migration.

Video Educator Actions

- Visibly show families they are welcome
- Engage families as valued members of the school community
- Learn about students' education and cultural backgrounds

Learning Goals

- ✓ **Process** content from the video by focusing on particular educator actions related to making students and families feel welcome and addressing the trauma of migration.
- ✓ **Connect** information presented in the video to their prior experiences and future practice through the theme of play.

Key Terminology

- **Refugee:** An individual who seeks to leave their country of origin and is unwilling or unable to return to it because of persecution or fear of persecution due to race, religion, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. A person who requests refugee status is still overseas until the country of placement is determined. Refugees are eligible to adjust to lawful permanent resident status after one year of continuous presence in the US.

Materials for Facilitator

- Chart paper
- Markers

Additional Resources:

- [Passages Simulation Game](#)
- [Right to Play: A Play Day in the Mae La Refugee Camp in Thailand](#)

Procedures

- Ask participants to reflect on the educator actions related to meeting the needs of families and the ways they currently reach out to the families of their own students who are refugees.
 - *Other video connections:* There were some powerful quotes in the video from students and teachers that could be used as a springboard for opening this activity and discussion:
 - “Refugees are people too”
 - “The more you know about someone, the better you can help them”
 - “Be open to what *they* [students] can *teach* you”
 - “They [students] are a primary source”
 - “It doesn’t matter where they come from, kids are kids”
 - You may ask participants to select their favorite quote and talk about what it means to them in relation to their own students. The last quote, “....kids are kids” is a great segue into the next part of the activity.
- Ask the group to think about a game that they learned or played as a child that they remember fondly. It may be one that they play(ed) with their own children/students/nieces/nephews, etc. either at home or at school.
 - The facilitator may want to show one of these videos to illustrate the power of games:
 - Children playing at the Ousman Pre-School in the Bredjing Refugee Camp in Eastern Chad: [Ousman Pre-School](#)
 - Five games children play in schoolyards in New York City [Around the World in 5 Kids’ Games](#)
 - An organization called Right to Play that works to empower children in refugee camps and throughout the world through play: [RightToPlayThailand](#)
 - Allow time to discuss what they noticed in the videos and how the play compares to their own experiences.




Tips for Facilitators

Be aware of the implicit or explicit racism that may be embedded in children's games. If this comes up, use this opportunity to discuss and consider implications and messages that children and adults receive.

- In small groups (3-5), have participants share a game with each other and list them on a piece of chart paper with a brief description. Post the charts around the room and give participants time to experience the gallery and see others' posts.
 - **Variation:** Put a checkmark next to those posts that are familiar and a question mark next to those that you would like to know more about.
- Lead a discussion in which the games with the most question marks or ones that participants volunteer are presented/demonstrated. Encourage participants to ask questions.
- Ask participants how they might use the games people play to invite students and families to share their own games as a means of making families feel welcome and indirectly addressing the trauma of migration.
 - **Variation:** Have small groups of educators brainstorm sample lesson ideas to incorporate these ideas into their teaching.



Classroom Connection: The Games People Play

 60–90 minutes

Learning Goal

- ✓ **Connect** learning to classroom practice and **explore** a means of connecting with families and their customs. This can serve to make families feel welcome and address the trauma of migration by connecting to memories of home and something they were able to bring with them upon migrating.

Materials

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Examples of childhood games (video, pictures, etc.) played in the US and other places (refugee camps, villages in home countries of refugee students)

Procedures

- After participating in a session such as the one described above, teachers collect “games people play” from their students and families. Since each teacher’s context is different, they may want to work in teams to plan how they will reach out to families. This is an opportunity to engage the families in sharing something of themselves and assisting with the translation from their home language to English through modeling and demonstration.
- Teachers (or students) model playing and describing how to play a childhood game.
- Provide instructions to students on the information they are to collect from their parents or older adults in their families about the games they played as children, including:
 - The object of the game
 - How many players
 - Procedure—how it is played

Note: In some cultures, families may not play games in the same way that people in western cultures do. Students may describe the ways that their parents played as children, which may or may not be a structured game.

Teachers can collect the games from their students and families and share with each other in a subsequent meeting, looking for similarities and differences among the games people play in different places and different circumstances.

— Extensions

- Collect the games in a book or online resource (demonstration videos, etc.) to share with others. The games described by participants in professional development could be included here as well.
- Conduct a schoolwide family game or “power of play” night.

Activity 5

The Poet Inside You

 60 minutes  Introductory/Intermediate  Teachers, Students, Families

Overview

According to UNESCO, which has been celebrating “World Poetry Day” annually on March 21st since 1999, poetry can support diverse linguistic expression and can provide opportunities to hear endangered languages. Poetry is also grounded in oral tradition, something shared by communities the world over and throughout human history. Poetry is an ancient art form that predates written text and was recited and/or sung to commemorate great historical events, religious tradition, laws, and family histories. In fact, “nearly every culture on every continent has produced its own unique poetic form, whether it comes in the form of song, spoken word, or printed literature.” According to the “Write to Life” Project of the Freedom from Torture Organization, a British initiative designed to empower and assist survivors of trauma, one of the many ways to encourage survivors of torture to heal is through creativity. They say that poetry is a fantastic bridge for recovery from trauma and is a means to understand and communicate the feelings that result from it.

Video Educator Actions

- Address trauma related to migration
- Create spaces for students to share their immigration stories
- Remind students they can share their experiences, but don’t have to if they aren’t ready
- Learn about students’ experiences as refugees

Learning Goals

- ✓ Process content from the video by focusing on particular educator actions related to making students/families feel welcome and addressing the trauma of migration in safe and positive ways.
- ✓ Connect information presented in the video to themselves and their students and families.

¹ Acclaro (2011, May 31). From Abecedarian to Zuhdiyyah: Poetry around the globe. www.acclaro.com/blog/from-abecedarian-to-zuhdiyyah-poetry-around-the-globe/

Key Terminology

- **Asylum Seeker:** An individual in the United States or at a port of entry who is afraid to return to their home country due to an actual or well founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. Applications for asylum take place in the US and are granted infrequently. Asylees are eligible to adjust to lawful permanent resident status after one year of continuous presence in the US.
- **Refugee:** An individual who seeks to leave their country of origin and is unwilling or unable to return to it because of persecution or fear of persecution due to race, religion, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. A person who requests refugee status is still overseas until the country of placement is determined. Refugees are eligible to adjust to lawful permanent resident status after one year of continuous presence in the US.

Materials for Facilitator

- [Examples of poems written by refugees about the refugee experience](#) (videos, hard copies)
- [Poem templates](#) (if possible translate templates into the languages spoken at home by students)
- Chart paper or other means of projecting/displaying
- [Artist and poet](#)

Procedures



Tips for Facilitators

The videos and poems in this activity depict the complicated experience of being a refugee in the US. On the one hand, they may have a sense of hope and gratitude to be able to migrate somewhere which could be safer than their country of origin. And on the other hand they remain critical of US imperialism which often causes forced migration and the refugee crisis. It's important that discussions include this dichotomy as students grapple with these realities.

- Lead a discussion about poetry and read (or watch a reading) of poems written by refugees about the refugee experience to the class (see sample poems in appendix). Talk about poetry as a means of exploring and expressing one's own feelings and identity.



Tips for Facilitators

Ask participants to read and reread the poem carefully both silently and aloud within their small groups. Debrief after the poem by having groups pull out key words or phrases that affected them.

Suggested questions:

- What do you notice about the poem?
- How did it feel to read this poem?
- Who wrote the poem?
- What might be the poet's message or intention?
- What kinds of emotions, positive and/ or negative, did you experience?

After watching a video of spoken word poem, debrief by having groups pull out key words or phrases that affected them. Suggested questions:

- How did it feel to read this poem?
- What might be the poet's message or intention?
- What kinds of emotions, positive and/ or negative, did you experience?
- Were there similarities or differences in the stories of each refugee poet?
- How could you incorporate opportunities for and/or encourage translanguaging in this type of activity?

-
- Introduce the Self-Portrait and Diamante Poem templates and model how to complete them.
 - Ask participants to select one of the templates to work on, first reflecting alone and then working with a partner.
 - Once completed, ask for volunteers to share their poems and allow time for participants to ask questions of each other.



Classroom Connection: The Poet Inside You

- Teachers plan for using this activity with their students. This is a great beginning-of-the-school-year activity for getting to know students and for them to get to know each other, as well as building a classroom community with a culture of openness, sharing, and appreciation of one another.
- Ask students to work with a family member at home to first explain and share their own poems, and then to work with the family member to complete one of their own. These can be shared in a subsequent class by the student for their family member or by inviting families in for a poetry night at which these and other poems could be read and recited.

Activity 6

Unique Needs of Refugee Students: Case Study Analysis

 60 minutes  Intermediate  School, Community

Overview

Some refugees come to the US from countries that have experienced armed conflict, such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Syria, Ukraine, etc. The children who we meet in the *Refugees and Immigrants in Schools* video show no evident signs of distress, but it is important to recognize that refugee children are not a monolithic group. Knowing the circumstances of many refugees can help educators better understand the needs of their students and the fact that adjustment to life in a US school can take time and patience. It is important to understand that many refugees, especially children, may have experienced many traumatic events and hardships during their journey to the United States. Some of these events may be directly related to the persecution or trauma that forced them (and/or their families) to leave their home country. They endure major developmental changes and challenges. Such experiences may impact their emotional and physical health and in turn impact their ability to learn.

Video Educator Actions

- Address trauma related to migration
- Learn about students' experiences as refugees - Ask about prior schooling
- Connect with local resettlement agencies and immigrant organizations

Learning Goals

- ✓ **Identify** and **assist** refugee students who might need additional support because they are struggling with a myriad of migratory traumatic experiences.

Key Terminology

- **Refugee:** An individual who seeks to leave their country of origin and is unwilling or unable to return to it because of persecution or fear of persecution due to race, religion,

membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. A person who requests refugee status is still overseas until the country of placement is determined. Refugees are eligible to adjust to lawful permanent resident status after one year of continuous presence in the US.

Materials for Facilitator

- Handout 1: [What is special about special needs of refugee children? Guidelines for teachers](#)
- Handout 2: [What have refugee families experienced](#)
- Handout 3: [Effects of trauma on refugee children](#)
- [Case Study Handout](#)
- [Resources and References Handout](#)



Tips for Facilitation

Given that at times schools confuse language barriers with special needs and place children in the wrong grade level, it is crucial that participants not jump to conclusions about their students' socio-emotional functioning when working with refugee children. Such decisions can leave students labelled and placed in inappropriate classes. As educators, it is our responsibility to seek consultation to ensure that students have access to appropriate evaluations of their cognitive and emotional functioning if there are such concerns. Resources such as [Distinguishing Language Acquisition from Learning Disabilities](#) can be helpful.

Procedures

- Prior to this session, send all participants the following short article for their review: Handout 1: [What is special about special needs of refugee children? Guidelines for teachers](#).
- Spend the first few minutes of the session gathering reactions to the article. You can include Resources (Handout 2: [What have refugee families experienced](#) and Handout 3: [Effects of trauma on refugee children](#)) for additional information and discussion in the larger group. What did they learn? Any surprises?
- Then provide the participants with the following case study (printed or projected, printed version available in appendix). In dyads or triads, invite them to explore the case and respond to the following questions:

- Have they ever encountered any students like Salay? What were their experiences?
- What are signs of difficulty in this case?
- What are the possible explanations for Salay’s difficulties at school?
- What assumptions might we be making about Salay’s experiences?
- What additional information might be needed?
- What can they do to support her?

Case Study: A young girl having difficulties in school

Salay was born in Baghdad, Iraq. She and her family were forced to leave for Syria. After an older sister was killed, the family fled the civil war there. During their flight, they were separated from their father for several months. Eventually the family was reunited and they spent four years in a refugee camp in Turkey. When the family moved to New Haven as refugees in 2014, Salay did not speak English.

Salay is now 14 years old and is in the 5th grade at a local school. She lives with her mother, a former nurse who now works around the clock as a home health aide. The family has not heard from Salay’s father in 10 months. In your class, Salay has been having difficulty with her schoolwork. She struggles with reading, has problems paying attention in class, and needs a lot of supervision to get her work done. When she is not daydreaming in class, Salay can be disruptive and picks fights with the teacher and students. She has very few friends. Often, Salay abruptly leaves the classroom saying she has a stomach ache or headache.

- In the larger group discussion, listen to the conclusions from each small group (maybe write up on a board or large piece of paper).



Tip for Facilitators

There are many reasons for Salay to have difficulties with school. Consider including the following suggestions as possible explanations for Salay’s difficulties at school:

She may have a learning disability or ADHD (attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder), but her behavior may also be related to limited school experience, or the family’s emotional and psychosocial challenges.

You can also include some of these suggestions in the discussion of what educators and/or the school can do to support her:

- An open discussion with school officials and teachers
- A consultation with the school guidance counselor or psychologist

- The school may consider placing her on the referral or wait list for a psychoeducational assessment through the school board.
 - Volunteer tutors could help Salay with her homework.
 - Referral to a community agency working with refugees or Middle Eastern families would also be helpful
-

- Consider ending the session by presenting additional resources for the participants, found in the appendix.

Activity 7

Community Resource List

 90 minutes  Introductory / Intermediate  School, Community

Overview

A resource is a source of supply, support, or aid, especially one that can be readily drawn upon when needed. Often there are resources within the community that can be used to provide further support for refugee children and their families. However, due to their myriad of past chaotic experiences, refugee families may not be aware of the resources or are afraid to seek them out. This activity allows educators to share and compile additional local resources beyond the classroom that they can use and/or share with the families they work with.

Video Educator Actions

- Learn about students' experiences as refugees
- Connect with local resettlement agencies and immigrant organizations

Learning Goals

- ✓ **Identify and share** information about useful resources in the community outside the classroom that can further support refugee children and their families.

Key Terminology

- **Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (BRIA)**: The New York state agency responsible for the implementation of services to refugees. (Also called Refugee Services or RF within the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance)
- **Community-Based Organizations (CBO)**: A non-profit organization built by the community and for the community. CBOs work on the local level to improve the lives of the community; members include local leaders, volunteers, and stakeholders in these organizations.

Materials for Facilitator

- Blank sheets of paper to be handed out to participants
- Maps of the 10-mile radius surrounding the school

- Markers & crayons
- Pencils and paper for taking notes
- Computers with access to the internet

Procedures

- Hand out a blank sheet of paper to each participant. Invite them to imagine arriving in a new country where they do not speak the language (OR think about the last time they moved to a new state/neighborhood or travelled to another country). What helped them with their own adjustment/transition? For example: What resources did they have access to? What did they need to know (e.g., Where do you buy groceries? What's the nearest hospital?) What helped with their transition (ex. community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, public parks, libraries, etc.)?
- Ask participants to exchange information with their neighbor. Discuss responses with the larger group while documenting ideas on the board/large post-it/projector.
- Hand out another blank sheet of paper to each participant. Ask them to consider the refugee children and families they are currently working with. "What challenges do you think they are faced with as they adjust to life in the United States and in this community in particular?" Invite them to jot down their thoughts (e.g., language barriers, housing, change of status, transportation, etc.)
- Introduce the concept of "Resources." According to Dictionary.com, "A resource is a source of supply, support, or aid, especially one that can be readily drawn upon when needed." Using this definition, invite participants to consider, "What do you imagine would have made your refugee students and their families' transition into life in the US easier? What types of resources would be helpful/useful at such times?" Drawing on your own experiences and looking at the challenges your refugee students and their families have faced (or are currently facing), what are some resources in the community that might be helpful to them?" Encourage participants to discuss in pairs or small groups.
- Invite participants to generate a list of resources, within a 10-mile radius of the school, that could benefit their students and their families (ex. refugee resettlement agencies, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, Hospitals, public parks, libraries, etc.) Participants could use computers/tablets to conduct this research together.
- After participants have generated initial lists, return to the larger group to discuss criteria for including resources. Discuss the following questions: What makes a resource helpful to refugee families, including: What does that resource have to offer? Are multiple languages spoken? Is it a refugee friendly resource? Is it a community-based organization? Is it a faith-based organization? What are the hours? Who do they serve?

- Note this criteria on the board or chart paper to use as a filter to determine which resources to include or exclude.
- As a large group, remind participants to consider their refugee students: What might be missing from the list of resources generated? Are the resources identified ones that will really help these families – how do we know?
- Next, using a map of the neighborhood, participants can pinpoint on that map where these resources are located.
- **Extension:** Have participants call or visit the resources on their list themselves to gather first-hand information about the resources, before sharing the Resource List with their students and families. Or, to further strengthen the connections between the school and the community, after meeting with the organization, invite one (or more) of these organizations to visit the school.
- **The Resource List** can be set up as a living document online, so that all participants can have access to it and constantly update and expand the list of resources to share among themselves and with the families they work with.

Activity 8

Funds of Knowledge

 45–60 minutes  Introductory  Student, Faculty, Classroom, Family, Community, School

Overview

Funds of Knowledge are the essential cultural practices and knowledge that are embedded in the daily practices and culture of families (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). It is this knowledge and expertise that refugee and immigrant students and their families have through their communities and culture. There are 10 categories for Funds of Knowledge: Home Language; Family Values and Traditions; Caregiving; Friends and Family; Family Outings; Household Chores; Educational Activities; Favorite TV Shows; Family Occupations; Scientific Knowledge. This concept was developed by educational researchers Luis Moll, Cathy Amanti, Deborah Neff, and Norma Gonzalez. In addition to the reference list below, you may view the following video to learn more about [Funds of Knowledge](#).

Video Educator Actions

- Learn about students' education and cultural backgrounds
- Learn about students' experiences as refugees
- Ask about prior schooling

Learning Goals

- ✓ Identify and share Funds of Knowledge in their own lives.
- ✓ Identify Funds of Knowledge in their **refugee students' lives** in order to develop an asset-based perspective about their refugee students.

Key Terminology

- **Funds of Knowledge:** The cultural practices and knowledge that are embedded in the daily practices of families². Immigrants have had their practices discounted in school settings.

² González, N., Moll, L., & Amanti, C. (Eds). (2005). *Funds of Knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities and classrooms*.

However, a Funds of Knowledge approach views the cultural knowledge of minoritized people as central to student learning.

- **Unaccompanied Minor:** Children under 18 years old who enter the United States with no lawful immigration status and no parent or legal guardian in the United States available to care and take physical custody of them. Unaccompanied minors may apply for asylum in the US on their own.

Materials

- [Funds of Knowledge](#)
- Pencils or pens
- [Funds of Knowledge –Stories of Refugees](#)

Procedures

- Read the following quote from the video: *“I think like teachers should spend more time to know about that kid, so the more you know about someone, the better you can help them”* [0.27]. Ask participants to describe a time where they experienced this with a student or when they were a student themselves.
- Introduce the concept of Funds of Knowledge. *“It is important for teachers to find ways to learn more about the lives of their refugee students. Learning about students’ Funds of Knowledge is one way to learn about the assets they bring to the classroom.”* Provide an overview of Funds of Knowledge by playing the [You Tube video of Luis Moll’s briefly describing the concept of Funds of Knowledge](#).
- Pass out the Funds of Knowledge worksheet.
 - In order to identify Funds of Knowledge in their own lives, participants will complete Funds of Knowledge Worksheet in small groups.
 - Form small groups to review the 10 categories of Funds of Knowledge.
 - Think about Funds of Knowledge for you and your family.
 - Fill in your Funds of Knowledge on the lines provided. Skip the categories that don’t pertain to you or your family. Add a new category based on your culture.
 - Within your small group, share the aspects of your Funds of Knowledge that you feel comfortable discussing.
- Next, participants will read stories from different refugee students/families and map out Funds of Knowledge alongside their own. Stories can be found in the appendix, in the handout titled Funds of Knowledge—Stories of Refugees. Introduce these stories by saying, *“Many refugees experience unbelievable hardship as they are forced to flee their homes,*

often leaving family members behind, and go in search of safety. Despite these hardships, it is important to recognize the Funds of Knowledge our refugee students and their families possess.”



Tip for Facilitators

Provide a trigger warning for participants before they begin reading the stories. For example: *“These stories may include topics that some participants may find offensive and/or traumatizing. This module will push us emotionally and intellectually. If you are troubled by this, you may leave the room without explanation, excuse yourself from a conversation, or ask to speak to me privately.”*

Each breakout group can read a different refugee story and then form a jigsaw for sharing out. For more information on jigsaws, go to:




[The Jigsaw Classroom](#)

- Jigsaw directions (see www.jigsaw.org for more information on how to complete a jigsaw):
 - Appoint one participant from each group as the leader.
 - Provide each group member with a different refugee story and allow participants time to become familiar with their story.
 - Form temporary “expert” groups by having participants from each group join other participants assigned the same story. Allow them time to discuss and map out Funds of Knowledge.
 - Bring original groups back together and ask each participant to present his or her story/Funds of Knowledge identified to the group.
 - Float from group to group observing/facilitating conversation.
- After mapping out Funds of Knowledge for stories, participants will engage in a whole group discussion considering the following questions:
 - What similarities did you notice among the Funds of Knowledge shared in your small group and the refugee stories? What differences did you notice?
 - How might you gather the Funds of Knowledge of refugee children and families in your classroom or program?
 - How might this activity allow you to learn about refugee students’ prior schooling experiences?
 - Does the classroom culture support your refugee students’ realities? Are there aspects of our classroom culture that erase certain aspects of our refugee students’ realities?

- How can you work to preserve and honor the Funds of Knowledge that your students bring to my classroom?
- How do the refugee students' diverse Funds of Knowledge impact them positively in a new learning environment?
- What skills do refugee students have that will show up in our curriculum? (i.e., rich history of oral storytelling)
- Read the quote from the video: *"Learning about your refugee students' experiences allows you to move away from a deficit perspective and recognize their [students'] strengths. Understanding their journey's as refugees should promote empathy..."* Ask participants to free-write for a few minutes about the ways in which they can use what they've learned about Funds of Knowledge in their own interactions with students.
- Encourage them to circle two to three actions they can take immediately. Share those with a partner then with the larger group. (If time, refer to the principles outlined in the [NYSED Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework](#). More specifically, identify how you can address the principles of a "welcoming and affirming environment" and "inclusive curriculum and assessment".

Activity 9

Perspectives through Art

 45–60 minutes  Introductory  Student, Faculty

Overview

Refugee children and their families have often used visual art to share their perspectives as refugees with wider audiences. Some of this work is available for viewing in exhibitions such as, The Syrian Refugee Art Initiative, We Never Chose This, The Museum Is the Refugee’s Home, and many other local and international initiatives. Moving beyond text, visual art can allow people to express identities while exploring social and cultural factors that impact their lives. In this activity participants will analyze artwork created by refugees about their experiences.

Video Educator Actions

- Learn about students’ education and cultural backgrounds
- Learn about students’ experiences as refugees
- Participate in cultural events to learn more about refugee communities

Learning Goals

- ✓ **Explore** social and cultural influences on the development of their refugee students’ identity through artistic expression.
- ✓ **Analyze** refugee artwork and reflect on their [refugee] perspectives.
- ✓ **Create** their own art that conceptualizes their emotions and reactions to the artwork.

Materials for Facilitator

- Large post-its and/or paper for group note-taking
- Markers
- Printed color images of artwork created by refugees. (Note alternative for projecting images in the steps.) Sample artwork is included in the handout titled “[Artwork Created](#)”

by Refugees” in the appendix. Artworks may be selected from exhibitions such as the following or via additional research:

- [7 art initiatives that are transforming the lives of refugees](#)
 - [The Syrian Refugee Art Initiative](#)
 - [‘We never chose this’: refugees use art to imagine a better world - in pictures](#)
 - [The Museum Is the Refugee’s Home](#)
- Large post-its or printed sheets with visual inquiry discussion questions such as the following sample prompts:
- List all the adjectives that come to mind in your first look at the artwork.
 - What do you think the artist might be trying to tell us?
 - What messages might they be trying to convey?
 - What does the image remind you of?
 - What questions do you have about what you see?
 - What do you imagine could have happened moments prior to [or after] the scene shown here? What in the artwork made you say that?
 - What feeling or mood do you get from this artwork? What about it makes you say that?
- Paper
- Drawing materials (pens, pencils)
- Optional: additional art supplies for a collaborative painting and/or collage (paint, brushes, glue, magazines, scissors, etc.)

Resources

- [Guide for discussing works of art](#)

Procedures

- The facilitator should choose artwork to display ahead of time and display them on large chart paper along with at least one visual inquiry prompt. (Alternatively, images may be projected in the classroom for a full group conversation in lieu of steps 4-7 using the questions above or other visual inquiry methods.)
- Before starting, give a trigger warning to participants: *“These images/artifacts may be offensive and/or traumatizing to participants. This module will push us emotionally and intellectually. If you feel yourself being triggered, you may leave the room without explanation, excuse yourself from a conversation, or ask to speak to me privately”.*

- Participants will view artwork of refugee children and their families. Potential pieces to focus on can be found in the appendix in the handout titled “Artwork Created by Refugees”. Participants can engage in a Gallery Experience to view and analyze artwork.
- Divide participants into teams of 4-6, depending on the size of the group. Each group should start at a different image and prompt.
- Direct groups to start by simply looking at the image to describe what they see before answering the question/prompt. Once they have done this, they can discuss the prompt and one recorder should write the group’s responses, thoughts, and comments on the chart paper or white board associated with the image.
- After 3-5 minutes, the groups rotate to the next poster. Participants look first at the image, then read and discuss the previous group’s responses and add content of their own. Repeat until all groups have visited each image. To involve all group members, you can have groups switch recorders at each station.
- **Reflect/Debrief:** Have participants go back to their first poster to read all that was added to their first response. Bring the group back together to discuss what was learned and make final conclusions about what they saw and discussed. Guiding questions for debrief may include:
 - What similarities/differences did you notice among the ideas conveyed in the artwork?
 - What was surprising about the artworks? About the collective responses?
 - How might this activity allow you to learn about refugee students’ prior schooling experiences and cultural backgrounds?
- Ask participants to choose one theme or surprise that emerged for them in viewing the artwork and to free-write on that idea for 1-2 minutes.
- Have participants re-read their free-write and draw an image or symbol that captures their ideas. Share this with a partner. Invite people to share their images with the larger group. Alternatively, ask participants to place their images on the floor or wall and to identify connections between the imagery they created. Discuss what these images reveal about their own understanding about their students and how it might direct future research and professional development.
- If time permits, combine these individual images into a larger collective work of art.



Classroom Connection: Perspectives Through Art

Engage students in a similar Gallery Experience activity using visual inquiry methods.

Note: Depending on your students' experiences, many may not be comfortable creating artwork directly about their stories of immigration. You can provide multiple prompts to allow students to choose what they would like to focus their art-making on (ex. experiences of journeys or moments of love).

Activity 10

Counter Storytelling

 45–60 minutes  Introductory  Student, Faculty, Community

Overview

According to the United Nations University (UNU) Institute for Globalization, Culture and Mobility, transnational dynamics including the “war on terror” have increased far-right extremism, prejudiced attitudes, and xenophobia. There are many biases, negative perspectives, and propaganda that exist about refugee and immigrant students. This compounds the risks and threats that refugees face everyday. This can be a source of ongoing trauma and have a negative impact on the social-emotional well-being of refugees. Teachers should connect with local resettlement agencies and immigrant organizations whose mission and vision is to empower refugees and counter these deficit perspectives.

Video Educator Actions

- Address trauma related to migration
- Connect with local resettlement agencies and immigrant organizations

Learning Goals

- ✓ **Analyze** media discourse about refugees for bias and stereotypes.
- ✓ **Identify** local resettlement agencies and immigrant organizations.
- ✓ **Select** powerful counter storytelling from multimodal sources about refugee students and their families.

Key Terminology

- **Counter Storytelling:** A way to center the voices and experiences of people who are often silenced in society. The stories go against mainstream narratives and challenge commonly held conceptions about power and privilege along the lines and at the intersection of race, gender and migration, among other areas.
- **Xenophobia:** The fear, hatred, and discrimination against people who come from other places or countries, or are perceived to be foreigners or outsiders.

Materials

- Printed current news articles about refugees (facilitator should select and print these in advance of the workshop)
- [List of local resettlement agencies and immigrant organizations](#)
- Paper
- Pen or pencils

Procedures



Tip for Facilitators

Give the trigger warning below before beginning the activity. Invite participants to share (but do not force) about their personal experiences with similar problematic attitudes and practices.

****Trigger warning: This module will push us emotionally and intellectually. If you feel yourself being triggered, you may leave the room without explanation, excuse yourself from a conversation, or ask to speak to me privately”.*

For support on developing critical media literacy around issues of xenophobia in the media, consult [this report](#).

-
- **Warm-up activity:** Ask participants to use their phones/laptops to search the web for current news articles about refugees. Ask what they notice about the articles they are seeing (i.e. common themes, imagery, language, etc.).
 - Review the term xenophobia.
 - Divide participants in groups of 3-5 and hand out one printed current news article to each group. Participants should read the headlines and skim the articles with an eye towards how refugees are being represented. Encourage participants to underline/circle statements that promote a negative and/or stereotypical and/or xenophobic view of refugees.
 - In these small groups discuss questions such as:
 - What (if any) were the positive aspects of how refugees were represented?
 - What (if any) were the negative aspects of how refugees were represented?
 - Are there patterns about how refugees are viewed in the media?
 - To what extent are the statements made racist or xenophobic?

- **Option:** Invite groups to edit the articles to eliminate the racist and/or xenophobic imagery, language, and writing.
- Debrief as a whole group by inviting participants to summarize their groups findings. Facilitate a conversation where they consider how the beliefs or attitudes in the mainstream can impact our refugee students and families. Consider the educational implications of the messages in the media: how do they shape student and family experiences at school?
- Pass out examples of the mission and vision of the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants or mission statements from one of the Refugee Resettlement Agencies listed in the appendix. Analyze the language used in these examples to determine how they differ from the language in the news articles. Highlight the beliefs, practices, and attitudes that *counter* the problematic statements shared earlier.
- In small groups, research examples of counter stories that reject the deficit language that are too often used with our refugee students. Generate a list of resources from music, movies, books, and artwork that center the asset-based stories of immigrants. Consider how this list might be incorporated into your teaching.



Tips for Facilitators

Alternative formats for positive expression could be to have participants search for political cartoons and change the captions or draw their own cartoons with captions. Another means of expression could be to create a meme or flyer with a positive message about refugees.

In the debrief discussion in step 6, you might remind participants of the pervasiveness of xenophobia in the media with a comment such as: “If you found any of the descriptions problematic you might want to consider this is the actual deficit framing of our refugee students and their families confront on a regular basis. This type of discourse is used to describe refugees on a daily basis by those in power.”

Appendix

Activity 1: Anticipation Guide

Before		Statement, Rationale and Evidence	After	
Agree	Dis-agree		Agree	Dis-agree
		Quote 1: Rationale: Evidence:		
		Quote 2: Rationale: Evidence:		
		Quote 3: Rationale: Evidence:		
Reflection:				

Activity 1: Alternative Format - True/False Quiz

How Much Do YOU Understand Your Refugee Students' Experiences?

TRUE or FALSE?

- ___ 1. The vast majority of refugees speak Spanish.
- ___ 2. All refugee children should be willing and able to share their migration stories.
- ___ 3. Local refugee community groups and agencies can serve as important resources for educators.
- ___ 4. All refugees come to this country in search of safety.
- ___ 5. Refugee families may have experienced trauma during their migration.
- ___ 6. There are steps that school districts can take to engage refugee families in their children's education.
- ___ 7. It is important that refugee families experience the school setting as safe.
- ___ 8. The best way for refugee children to adapt to the classroom setting is for them to communicate in only English.

ANSWERS

- F** 1. The vast majority of refugees speak Spanish.
- F** 2. All refugee children should be willing and able to share their migration stories.
- T** 3. Local refugee community groups and agencies can serve as important resources for educators.
- T** 4. All refugees come to this country in search of safety.
- T** 5. Refugee families may have experienced trauma during their migration.
- T** 6. There are steps that school districts can take to engage refugee families in their children's education.
- T** 7. It is important that refugee families experience the school setting as safe.
- F** 8. The best way for refugee children to adapt in the classroom setting is for them to communicate only in English.

Activity 1: Sample Statements and Example Responses

Sample Statements	Example Responses
Refugees are happier in the US.	Families may have been forced to flee for reasons of safety, but still miss family, friends, and the life they left behind.
If we can't provide materials in all other languages it is best to use only English.	We should provide home language information and supports to the greatest extent possible and available, while continuing to seek out resources for low incidence languages.
Students who are refugees may have experienced trauma.	This is true and teachers and other school personnel may need to receive professional development and seek out supports to address the effects of trauma.
All students who are refugees will have missed a great deal of school.	While students will most likely have missed some schooling while in transit from one location to another, the classes provided in refugee camps vary in quantity and quality and we shouldn't make assumptions. It is always best to find out from the students and their families as much information as they can give about their educational experiences.
Spanish speakers are not refugees or asylees.	While many Spanish speakers may be born citizens (ex. Puerto Ricans or others who may have been born in the US), other Spanish speakers may have come as refugees or asylees (ex. Cubans, Guatemalan, Salvadorian, Venezuelan, etc.)

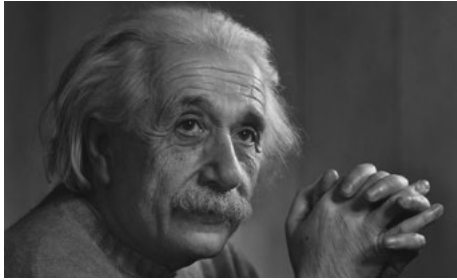
Sample Statements	Example Responses
<p>Because students have experienced trauma, it is best not to talk about issues that may upset them.</p>	<p>While students should not be forced to talk about things they don't want to talk about, teaching about global/universal issues with which they can identify can be validating and cathartic. It is essential for educators to receive PD and be aware of the signs of trauma, as well as know about the available resources and supports.</p>
<p>We are all immigrants/refugees.</p>	<p>While it is true that all US inhabitants, unless they are Native American, are descended from people who came here from somewhere else, the lived experiences, (including systems of support and inequities faced) of recently arrived immigrants and refugees are not comparable to the experiences of those who have been here for generations. A statement such as this also does not take into account those whose ancestors arrived here involuntarily, for example as slaves or indentured servants, or others whose land was taken away by the US Government.</p>
<p>To make students feel good, reassure them that you will keep them safe.</p>	<p>In the <i>Refugees and Immigrants in Schools</i> video, one of the teacher actions is, "Don't make promises you can't keep." This should also apply to promises of safety and security.</p>

Sample Statements	Example Responses
<p>Post-traumatic stress may cause refugee students to act out in school.</p>	<p>This statement is true, and often the manifestations of trauma may appear as defiance, disobedience, and/or other behavioral issues. However, not all refugee students will act out. Socio-emotional and pedagogical supports may be needed regardless of whether or not the student exhibits acting out behaviors.</p>
<p>I should not send information home to parents as they may not understand it.</p>	<p>Communication with families is essential to the success of all students and refugee families are no exception. School personnel must identify the preferred language(s) of communication and make every effort to communicate in a language that the families can understand. Educators must remember that communication is a two-way endeavor so that mechanisms for the families to initiate communication and/or respond to the school are essential and are required by law.</p>
<p>Refugees are here because they want a better life.</p>	<p>A refugee is someone who has fled their home country and cannot return because of a well-founded fear of persecution based on religion, race, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group.</p>

Activity 2: Images of Refugees

“REFUGEES?”

Refugee #1



Refugee #2



Refugee #3



Refugee #4



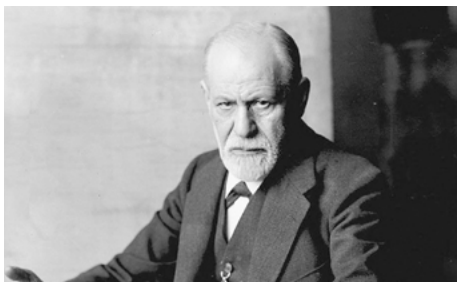
Refugee #5



Refugee #6



Refugee #7





It doesn't matter where they come from, kids are just kids, they could be the future as well, even though they are refugees they could learn and could do better for your country as well.

Shahnaz, 7th grader

Activity 2: Key for Images of Refugees

Refugee 1: Albert Einstein, Physicist, Home Country: Germany

Developed the Theory of Relativity - $E=mc^2$, 1921 Nobel Prize in Physics. Fled Nazi Germany because of his Jewish background.

Refugee 2: M.I.A., Musician, Home Country: Sri Lanka

Rapper, singer, songwriter, record producer, visual artist, and activist. Family fled Sri Lanka due to their father's political activism during the Sri Lankan Civil war.

Refugee 3: The 14th Dalai Lama, Religious Leader, Home Country: Tibet

The Tibetan spiritual and thought leader. Sought refuge in India in 1959 during the Tibetan uprising against the Chinese rule. Received the Nobel Peace Prize for his work to promote peace and human rights around the world.

Refugee 4: Madeleine Albright, former Secretary of State, Home Country: Czechoslovakia

The first woman to be appointed U.S. Secretary of State. The daughter of a Czech diplomat, she was a refugee during World War II in England. Arrived on Ellis Island in 1948 at age 11.

Refugee 5: Sergey Brin, Google co-Founder, Home Country: Soviet Union

One of America's most famous entrepreneurs. Fled from the Soviet Union with family in 1979 due to increasing anti-Semitism.

Refugee 6: Luol Deng, Basketball Player, Home Country: Sudan

This two-time National Basketball Association (NBA) All-Star fled the Civil War in South Sudan with his family. They ended up as refugees in the United Kingdom.

Refugee 7: Sigmund Freud, Psychoanalyst, Home Country: Austria

Jewish-Austrian neurologist, best known as the founder of psychoanalysis. Fled persecution by the Nazis in Austria in June 1938 and took refuge in the UK.

Activity 4: Poem Templates

Self-Portrait Poem

Line 1: Your first name

Line 2: Four adjectives that describe you

Line 3: Your relationship to someone (mother of ____, son of ____, friend of ____)

Line 4: Speaker of ____ (languages you speak)

Line 5: Three things you love (name three things)

Line 6: Three things you dislike (name three things)

Line 7: Three things/places/people you would like to see

Line 8: Your profession, or your dream profession

Line 9: Your last name

Diamante Poem

Diamante poem. A diamante poem, or diamond poem, is a style of poetry that is made up of seven lines. The text forms the shape of a lozenge or diamond (◇). The form was developed by Iris Tiedt in *A New Poetry Form: The Diamante* (1969).

- Diamantes are seven lines long.
- The first and last lines have just one word.
- The second and sixth lines have two words.
- The third and fifth lines have three words.
- And the fourth line has four words.
- Lines 1, 4, and 7 have nouns.
- Lines 2 and 6 have adjectives.
- Lines 3 and 5 have verbs.

Here's an easy way to visualize all three rules:

Noun
Adjective, Adjective
Verb, Verb, Verb
Noun, Noun, Noun, Noun
Verb, Verb, Verb
Adjective, Adjective
Noun

Diamante poem specific to self/language/culture

Line 1: Your First Name

Line 2: 2 words to describe (adjectives) you, your family, or your home culture (in one or two languages)

Line 3: 3 words that tell things you like to do (actions) related to your culture

Line 4: 4 people, places, and/or things, with which you identify or that symbolize you, your culture/language

Line 5: 3 more actions

Line 6: 2 more adjectives

Line 7: Your Last name

Activity 5: Examples of poems written by refugees about the refugee experience

Refugee by Rubimbo Bungwe, aged 14, from Zimbabwe, 2002

So I have a new name – refugee.
Strange that a name should take away from me
My past, personality and hope.
Strange refuge this.
So many seem to share this name – refugee
Yet we share so many differences

I find no comfort in my new name.
I long to share my past, restore my pride,
To show, I too, in time, will offer more
Than I have borrowed.
For now the comfort that I seek
Resides in the old yet new name
I would choose – friend.

Reproduced from 'Global communities: Learning about Refugee Issues Secondary School Teaching Resource' (DFID 2005)

Home, by Warsan Shire (British-Somali poet)

no one leaves home unless
home is the mouth of a shark.
you only run for the border
when you see the whole city
running as well.
your neighbours running faster
than you, the boy you went to school with
who kissed you dizzy behind
the old tin factory is
holding a gun bigger than his body,
you only leave home
when home won't let you stay.
no one would leave home unless home
chased you, fire under feet,
hot blood in your belly.
it's not something you ever thought about
doing, and so when you did -
you carried the anthem under your breath,
waiting until the airport toilet
to tear up the passport and swallow,
each mouthful of paper making it clear that
you would not be going back.
you have to understand,
no one puts their children in a boat
unless the water is safer than the land.
who would choose to spend days
and nights in the stomach of a truck
unless the miles travelled
meant something more than journey

More poetry can be found at:

- [Write to Life—6 Poems by Refugees and Asylum Seekers](#)
- [Refuge, authored by Jason Fotso](#)

Videos:

- A Powerful Refugee Experience Poem (6:20) Babak Ghassim & Usama Elyas, 2017 [Refugee Experience TedEx](#)
- [Refugee \(2:50\) JJ Bola](#)
- I Am America (4:56) Sara Abou Rashed, Syrian refugee [I Am America on PBS](#)

Activity 6: Case Study

Case Study: A young girl having difficulties in school

Salay was born in Baghdad, Iraq. She and her family were forced to leave for Syria. After an older sister was killed, the family fled the civil war there. During their flight, they were separated from their father for several months. Eventually the family was reunited and they spent four years in a refugee camp in Turkey. When the family moved to New Haven as refugees in 2014, Salay did not speak English.

Salay is now 14 years old and is in the 5th grade at a local school. She lives with her mother, a former nurse who now works around the clock as a home health aide. The family has not heard from Salay's father in 10 months. In your class, Salay has been having difficulty with her schoolwork. She struggles with reading, has problems paying attention in class, and needs a lot of supervision to get her work done. When she is not daydreaming in class, Salay can be disruptive and picks fights with the teacher and students. She has very few friends. Often, Salay abruptly leaves the classroom saying she has a stomach ache or headache.

Questions:

1. Have you ever encountered any students like Salay? What were their experiences?
2. What are signs of difficulty in this case?
3. What are the possible explanations for Salay's difficulties at school?
4. What assumptions might we be making about Salay's experiences?
5. What additional information might be needed?
6. What can you do to support her (or a student like her)?

Activity 6: Resources and References

- [National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#)
- [National Center for PTSD](#)
- Strekalova, E., & Hoot, J. L. (2008). What is special about special needs of refugee children?: Guidelines for teachers. *Multicultural Education*, 16(1), 21-24.
- Szente, J., Hoot, J., & Taylor, D. (2006). Responding to the special needs of refugee children: Practical ideas for teachers. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 34(1), 15-20.
- [Ways Teachers Can Help Refugee Students: Some Suggestions](#)
- [Supporting refugee children & youth: Tips for educators](#)
- Here are some tips for educators on what to do, and what not to do, educators they suspect that a student’s schoolwork and/or behavior is being affected by trauma:

DO	DO NOT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Remember that your student is doing the best they can to survive — Be PROTECTIVE — Be PATIENT — Be NURTURING — Be CONSISTENT — Be INFORMED — Follow guidelines for confidentiality and mandated reporting — Safety, Trust, and Confidentiality are key. What do you do to create this type of classroom environment for your students? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> — DO NOT try to rush student’s return to the way they were before the trauma (or where you think they should be). It takes time. — DO NOT minimize or ridicule any of their behaviors. — DO NOT ignore changes in behavior, especially those that are potentially dangerous—consult a trauma specialist. — DO NOT personalize their reactions. Often their reactions are related to their terror, not to you, even though it may seem as if they are blaming, attacking, or ignoring you. — DO NOT hesitate to consult with a trauma specialist about any of your concerns. — DO NOT avoid learning all you can about children and trauma, even though it will seem at times that it would be better to just forget it, avoid it, or not talk about it.

Note: The CDC estimated in 2012 that there were over half a million young women and girls at risk of undergoing a non-medical surgical procedure known as female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C). It is a practice that is carried out in certain nations (which are countries of origin for some of our refugee students) and among certain cultures, despite being outlawed in the United States and in an increasing number of nations. The Council of the Great City Schools developed information and tools to help school district personnel understand the issue and plan for supporting the young women and girls who may be affected.

For information and to access the resource guide, visit:

[FGM/C Prevention: A Resource for U.S. Schools](#)

Activity 8: Funds of Knowledge Worksheet

Overview

Funds of Knowledge are the essential cultural practices and knowledge that are embedded in the daily practices and culture of families (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005). It is this knowledge and expertise that refugee and immigrant students and their families have through their communities and culture. This concept was developed by educational researchers Luis Moll, Cathy Amanti, Deborah Neff, and Norma Gonzalez. In addition to the reference list below, you may view the following video to learn more about [Funds of Knowledge](#).

Steps for activity

1. Form small groups to review the 10 categories of Funds of Knowledge.
2. Think about Funds of Knowledge for you and your family.
3. Fill in your Funds of Knowledge on the lines provided. Skip the categories that don't pertain to you or your family. Add a new category based on your culture.
4. Within your small group, share the aspects of your Funds of Knowledge that you feel comfortable discussing.

Funds of Knowledge

Home Language	Ex: Arabic, Spanish, Bengali,
Family Values and Traditions	Ex: holiday celebrations, religious beliefs, work ethic
Caregiving	Ex: swaddling a baby, use of pacifier, co-sleeping, child care
Friends and Family	Ex: visiting grandma; barbecues; sports outings
Family Outings	Ex: shopping; beach; library; picnic
Household Chores	Ex: sweeping; dusting; doing dishes
Educational Activities	Ex: visiting museums; walking the neighborhood
Favorite TV Shows	Ex: watching Dora; Sesame Street; Sid the Science Kid
Family Occupations	Ex: fishing; office; construction; policeman
Scientific Knowledge	Ex: recycling; exercising; health
	Additional Funds of Knowledge

Adapted from: González, N., Moll, L., & Amanti, C. (Eds). (2005). *Funds of Knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities and classrooms*. Erlbaum.

Activity 8: Funds of Knowledge—Stories of Refugees

Here we present the stories of actual refugee students:



Alia’s story: “The last thing I remember of Syria, before we left, was when my mother was taking me from our place to our grandparents. The roads were full of dead corpses. I saw dead people with no heads or no hands or legs. I was so shocked I couldn’t stop crying. To calm me down, my grandfather told me they were mean people, but I still prayed for them, because even if some considered them mean, they were still dead human beings. Back at home, I left a friend in Syria, her name was Rou’a. I miss her a lot and I miss going to school with her. I used to

play with her with my Atari but I couldn’t bring it with me. I also used to have pigeons, one of them had eggs. I would feed them and care for them. I’m worried about them. I really pray someone is still caring for them. But here I have a small kitten that I really love! I miss my home a lot. I hope one day we’ll be back and things will be just like before.”

Example of Alia’s Funds of Knowledge

Home Language	Arabic
Family Values and Traditions	
Caregiving	Taking care of animals
Friends and Family	Visiting grandparents, friend named Rou’a
Family Outings	
Household Chores	Caring for pigeons, feeding birds, taking care of kitten
Educational Activities	
Favorite TV Shows	
Family Occupations	
Scientific Knowledge	Life cycle (egg hatching)
Games	Game – playing video games



Shafaq’s Story: “I used to have a peaceful life and live in my amazing home in Dera’a. I enjoyed the nature around my house and the food coming from the land. I woke up every morning to the sound of birds singing. The brutality of the civil war forced my family to leave this house and to start the journey to be refugees. Since the start of our journey, we moved a lot in Lebanon and I attended different schools. In the end my family decided to go close to the border with Syria. We came to this area because we just want to survive. My father is

working as an electrician and this is the only income for our family. All of my family are living in a tiny house with one bedroom, a small kitchen and a bathroom. We are considered illegal because we don’t have official documents. I am behind two years in school because of moving from one school to another. I am still doing very good in my school and I will continue to do that. I want to finish my education, to help my family, and to help other people that want to learn. I consider myself lucky to have Al Jalil Center. I got a lot of educational, emotional, and psychological support. I am also really sad because of the unknown future waiting for me. Every day I wonder where I will be tomorrow. Yes, it’s an unknown future.”

Example of Shafaq’s Funds of Knowledge

Home Language	Arabic
Family Values and Traditions	Education
Caregiving	Family members supporting each other
Friends and Family	Al Jalil Center
Family Outings	
Household Chores	
Educational Activities	
Favorite TV Shows	
Family Occupations	Electrician
Scientific Knowledge	Birds, agriculture



Yacob's Story: "Back in Myanmar my father was a farmer and he also went fishing. Along with my siblings, I used to attend school regularly. I was in Grade 2 when we left. We used to learn Burmese literature in school. But it all came to an end the day our house got burnt. The houses in our village were on fire. We couldn't run to the jungle because it was on fire too. We fled to another village but that village was also attacked. We were stranded so we fled again to a canal and

stayed there for two days with no food. We made it across the border and now we live here in the camps. I like being a leader. At the centre, I get the children together and then ask them to follow me when I am doing the actions. I tell them 'Please, I am going to start reciting the poem, so follow me.' I am a good boy and a quick learner. I also make other children laugh. It is fun. I want to learn more and more because I want to become a teacher when I grow up."

Stories adapted from: [13 Powerful Refugee Stories From Around The World](#)



Moises' Story: Moisés and his family made the trip from Venezuela over a year ago. They made their way by bus due southward from their hometown, the northern city of El Tigre, to Pacaraima, a remote border town on the Brazilian side of the nearly 2,200-kilometer-long land border between the two countries which has become the main point of entry for Venezuelan refugees and migrants seeking safety in Brazil. Poised and articulate beyond his years, Moisés

appears well on his way to a successful career in journalism. Holding his plastic microphone aloft, he scans the spaces between the tent rows for potential interview subjects, making a beeline to those who catch his fancy. More often than not, they accept his interview requests and end up sharing their whole, often heartbreaking stories to Moisés.

Story was adapted from: ['This is Moises, live from Boa Vista'](#)



Mohammad's Story: Mohammad was only five years old when the Somali Civil War drove his parents away, forcing young Mohammad to live out the rest of his childhood without knowing his own mom and dad. He was taken in by his grandmother, who feared for his safety as a young child. One afternoon, Mohammad's grandmother answered her door and was confronted by an armed opposition

group. They commanded her to send Mohammad, now 13 years old, to become a soldier in their ranks. At the age of 13, Mohammad faced a decision that most of us will never have to make – to stay in Somalia and become a child soldier, or to flee his home and seek refuge in an unfamiliar place. Mohammad chose the latter.

Smugglers brought Mohammad out of Somalia and into Thailand. On his route, Mohammad was highly vulnerable to exploitation because he was an unaccompanied minor with few resources. Along the way, his smuggler stole his Somali passport, so Mohammad entered Thailand as an undocumented child. After arriving in Thailand, Mohammad prevailed – he attended school and became a standout soccer player. A dedicated student athlete, Mohammad traveled around Thailand to participate in tournaments with his soccer team. On one such school trip, Mohammad was detained by the Thai immigration police on the grounds that he was an undocumented migrant. At the age of 16, Mohammad was once again facing two impossible options: being deported back to Somalia or staying prisoner to the harsh living conditions of the Thai detention centers.

Story adapted from: [Mohammad's Story](#)

[Image source](#)

Activity 9: Artwork Created by Refugees



Dreams Lost, by Atefeh Fayazie, Afghanistan, 2019

"I have a family of five. I started my journey in [the] autumn of 2018, when we landed in Greece. I went to a wonderful art class, which gave me the opportunity to express my feelings by painting. This is one of my dreams – it shows a refugee who is struggling with death, and losing her dreams of coming to Europe to achieve her goals."



No Voice, by Masoumeh Jafari, Afghanistan, 2019

"Setayesh was a little Afghan girl living in Iran as a refugee. She was kidnapped, raped and killed by an Iranian man. I was really upset about her and her family. There are many girls like Setayesh who had the same experiences and cry in silence because justice didn't defend them. I decided to paint this picture to honour her memory, and show the pain and heartbreak I feel about what happened."

Hoping To Survive, by Razieh Gholami, Afghanistan, 2019

"The journey to safety is hard. Europe doesn't want refugees. We thought we had arrived to safety but Europe is trying to make us struggle more and send us back to danger."





Refugees 4 by Liu Xiaodong (2015)

Liu Xiaodong, in his painting “Refugees 4” (2015), depicts Syrian refugees at the port of Lesbos gathered together in a moment of rest. A show at the Phillips Collection features 75 artists on migration and displacement.

Credit: Liu Xiaodong and Massimo De Carlo



Guillermo Arias, “Aerial view of Honduran migrants heading in a caravan to the U.S., resting in a basketball court in San Pedro Tapanatepec, Oaxaca State, southern Mexico on October 28, 2018.”

Credit via Guillermo Arias for Agence France-Presse



Anna Boghiguan, “Refugees in Beirut (They tied and put their hearts together),” from 2014, gouache on paper.

Credit: Anna Boghiguan and Sfeir-Semler Gallery

Activity 10: Counter Storytelling

List of local resettlement agencies and immigrant organizations

Sample Analysis of the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants

Our Vision

Immigrants, refugees, and uprooted people will live dignified lives with their rights respected and protected in communities of opportunity.

Our Mission

To protect the rights and address the needs of persons in forced or voluntary migration worldwide and support their transition to a dignified life.

Refugee Resettlement Agencies

- Church World Service - <https://cwsglobal.org>
- Ethiopian Community Development Council - <https://www.ecdcus.org>
- Episcopal Migration Ministries - <https://episcopalmigrationministries.org>
- Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society - <https://www.hias.org>
- International Rescue Committee - <https://www.rescue.org>
- US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants - <https://refugees.org>
- Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services - <https://www.lirs.org>
- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops - <http://www.usccb.org>
- World Relief Corporation - <https://worldrelief.org>

AUTHOR BIOS

Adeyinka M. Akinsulure-Smith, Ph.D., ABPP is a licensed psychologist and a Professor in the Department of Psychology at The City College of New York, the City University of New York (CUNY) and at The Graduate Center, CUNY. Dr. Akinsulure-Smith has cared for forced migrants, including survivors of torture, armed conflict, and human rights abuses from around the world at the Bellevue Program for Survivors of Torture since 1999. In addition to her teaching and clinical work, Dr. Akinsulure-Smith is the recipient of several grants and fellowships. She has written extensively about service provision and mental health challenges facing forced migrants.

Tamara O. Alsace, Ph.D. is retired from the Buffalo Public Schools, where she held various positions during her 32+ year career, including as a bilingual elementary and special education teacher, professional development specialist, and as Director of Multilingual Education. In that role, she directed the bilingual, ESOL, & world languages programs. Since retiring, she has worked as a consultant for the Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBE-RN), the Council of the Great City Schools, and the American Reading Company. Dr. Alsace also serves on several non-profit boards and is active in professional and community organizations in Buffalo and at the state and national levels. A tireless advocate for the educational rights of multilingual/immigrant students and their families, she is a past-president of the New York State Association for Bilingual Education (NYSABE) and part of the current leadership team of New York Advocates for Fair/Inclusive Resources for Multilingual Learners (NY-AFFIRMS).

Gliset Colón, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor with the Exceptional Education Department at SUNY Buffalo State. She is also the Coordinator for the Teaching Bilingual Exceptional Individuals Graduate Certificate Program. Dr. Colón has research interests and expertise in literacy and language outcomes for multilingual students with and without disabilities, multi-tiered systems of support, disproportionality, and intersectionality. Dr. Colón is actively involved in several professional organizations at the local, state, and national levels.

SUPPORT PERSONNEL BIOS

Cynthia Nayeli Carvajal, Ph.D. is the Project Director for the CUNY Initiative on Immigration and Education. Originally from Guadalajara, Mexico, she immigrated to East Los Angeles, CA at the age of five. Her personal and professional goals are grounded in her experience as a formerly undocumented immigrant, student, and community member for twelve years of her life. Prior to this position Cynthia was the inaugural manager for the Immigrant Student Success Center at John Jay College, the first of its kind in New York State. Cynthia's academic and professional expertise centers the roles of educators in creating support systems for undocumented and immigrant students in their schools. Her field work spans across California, New York, and Arizona, providing a comparative understanding on the impact of policy and practice in politically varying states. She currently serves as a board member for the New York State Youth Leadership Council.

Marit Dewhurst, Ed.D. is the Director of Art Education and Associate Professor of Art and Museum Education at The City College of New York. She has worked as an arts educator and program coordinator in multiple arts contexts including community centers, museums, juvenile detention centers, and international development projects. Her research and teaching interests include social justice education, community-based art, youth empowerment, and the role of the arts in community development. In addition to multiple journal articles and chapters, her first book, *Social Justice Art: A framework for activist art pedagogy* highlights young activist artists. Her second book, *Teachers Bridging Difference: Exploring identity through art* describes how to use art as a tool to connect people across different sociocultural identities.

Tatyana Kleyn, Ed.D. is the Principal Investigator (PI) for the CUNY Initiative on Immigration and Education (CUNY-IIE) and Associate Professor and Director of the Bilingual Education and TESOL programs at The City College of New York. Her doctorate is in international educational development from Teachers College, Columbia University. She was a Fulbright Scholar in Oaxaca, Mexico studying return migration and Past President of the New York State Association for Bilingual Education. She served as acting co-PI and associate investigator for the CUNY New York State Initiative on Emergent Bilinguals (CUNY-NYSIEB) and is co-PI for the Multilingual Learner Project (MLP), a federal Title III grant program. Her research, films, and curricula address the intersection of immigration, education, and language. Tatyana's work in film as a producer and director includes the Living Undocumented Series, *Una Vida, Dos Países: Children and Youth (Back) in Mexico* and the Supporting Immigrants in Schools video series. Tatyana was an elementary school teacher in San Pedro Sula, Honduras and Atlanta, Georgia.

Resource Links

Supporting Immigrants in Schools Video Series.

Referenced on p.3 and Activity 1, p. 17, 18

<https://www.cuny-iie.org/sis-videos>

Emulsify Design.

Referenced on p. 5

www.emulsifydesign.com

The State of Black Immigrants.

Referenced on p. 7

<http://www.stateofblackimmigrants.com/assets/sobi-fullreport-jan22.pdf>

Native Land.

Referenced on p. 7

<https://native-land.ca/>

The Criminalization of Immigration in the United States.

Referenced on p. 8

<https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/criminalization-immigration-united-states>

Building a More Dynamic Economy: The Benefits of Immigration.

Referenced on p. 8

<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/reports/2019/06/26/471497/building-dynamic-economy-benefits-immigration/>

The Social Mobility of Immigrants and Their Children.

Referenced on p. 9

<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/social-mobility-immigrants-and-their-children>

The Education of Immigrant Children.

Referenced on p. 9

<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/14/12/education-immigrant-children>

Opportunities for White People in the Fight for Racial Justice.

Referenced on p. 9

<https://www.whiteaccomplices.org/>

Famous refugees!!!!

Referenced on Activity 1, p. 20, 22

<https://www.rescue.org/article/famous-refugees>

13 Powerful Refugee Stories From Around The World!!!!

Referenced on Activity 1, p. 20, 22

<https://www.globalgiving.org/learn/listicle/13-powerful-refugee-stories/>

CUNY-IIE Supporting Immigrants in Schools Resource Guide.

Referenced on Activity 1, p. 20

www.cuny-iie.org/s/SIS_ResourceGuide_Final.pdf

Bureau of Refugees Services—Population Data for FFY 2018.

Referenced on Activity 3, p. 24

<https://otda.ny.gov/programs/bria/documents/population-report.pdf>

The Languages of New York State: A CUNY-NYSIEB Guide for Educators.

Referenced on Activity 3, p. 24

<https://www.cuny-nysieb.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/NYSLanguageProfiles.pdf>

Omniglot—the online encyclopedia of writing systems & languages.

Referenced on Activity 3, p. 24

<https://omniglot.com/>

Translanguaging: A CUNY-NYSIEB Guide for Educators.

Referenced on Activity 3, p. 24

<https://www.cuny-nysieb.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Translanguaging-Guide-March-2013.pdf>

Passages—An awareness game confronting the plight of refugees.

Referenced on Activity 4, p. 27

<https://www.unhcr.org/473dc1772.pdf>

A play day in Mae La refugee camp in Thailand.

Referenced on Activity 4 , p.27

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OWEYEPIP61o&feature=emb_logo

Children’s Games in Refugee Camp Pre-School.

Referenced on Activity 4, p. 27

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WWpqVfKdaEM&feature=youtu.be>

Around the World in 5 Kid’s Games.

Referenced on Activity 4, p. 27

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/12/06/arts/kids-games.html>

Nico Hulkenberg visits Right to Play programs in Thailand.

Referenced on Activity 4, p. 27

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45oqa1wZ154&feature=youtu.be>

From Abecedarian to Zuhdiyyah: Poetry Around the Globe.

Referenced on Activity 5, p. 30

<https://www.acclaro.com/blog/from-abecedarian-to-zuhdiyyah-poetry-around-the-globe/>

Bola—Poet | Educator | Human.

Referenced on Activity 5, p. 31

<https://www.jjbola.com/>

What Is Special about Special Needs of Refugee Children? Guidelines for Teachers.

Referenced on Activity 6, p. 35

<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ822395>

What Have Refugee Families Experienced?

Referenced on Activity 6, p. 25

<https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/trauma-types/refugee-trauma/about-refugees>

What is Child Trauma?

Referenced on Activity 6, p. 35

<https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/trauma-types/refugee-trauma/effects>

Distinguishing Language Acquisition From Learning Disabilities.

Referenced on Activity 6, p. 35

http://gced.k12.mn.us/uploads/4/9/2/3/49230501/distinguish_language.pdf

Funds of Knowledge.

Referenced on Activity 8, p. 41, 42, 67

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aWS0YBpGkkE>

The Jigsaw Classroom.

Referenced on Activity 8, p. 43

<https://www.jigsaw.org/>

Culturally Responsive- Sustaining Education Framework.

Referenced on Activity 8, p. 44

<http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/crs/culturally-responsive-sustaining-education-framework.pdf>

The Syrian Refugee Art Initiative.

Referenced on Activity 9, p.46

<https://joelartista.com/syrian-refugees-the-zaatari-project-jordan/>

‘We never chose this’: refugees use art to imagine a better world—in pictures.

Referenced on Activity 9, p. 46

<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/gallery/2019/dec/25/we-never-chose-this-refugees-use-art-to-imagine-a-better-world-in-pictures>

The Museum Is the Refugee’s Home.

Referenced on Activity 9, p. 46

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/13/arts/design/the-museum-is-the-refugees-home.html>

7 art initiatives that are transforming the lives of refugees.

Referenced on Activity 9, p. 46

<https://www.unhcr.org/innovation/7-art-initiatives-that-are-transforming-the-lives-of-refugees/>

American Art at the Core of Learning.

Referenced on Activity 9, p. 46

<https://www.terraamericanart.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Terra-Discussing-Art-and-Anchor-Standards.pdf>

Addressing Xenophobia.

Referenced on Activity 10, p. 50

<https://i.unu.edu/media/gcm.unu.edu/attachment/4349/Adressing-Xenophobia-final.pdf>

Six Refugee Poems—a unique insight into the life of refugees and asylum seekers.

Referenced in Appendix on Activity 5, p. 63

<https://www.freedomfromtorture.org/real-voices/six-refugee-poems-a-unique-insight-into-the-life-of-refugees-and-asylum-seekers>

A poem about refugees you need to read.

Referenced in Appendix Activity 5 p. 63

<https://www.unhcr.org/innovation/a-poem-refugees-need-read/>

A powerful poem about the refugee experience | Babak Ghassim and Usama Elyas | TEDxEastEnd.

Referenced in Appendix Activity 5 p. 63

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yKNssAf8Gig&vl=en>

JJ Bola | Curb Call | Refuge | Spoken Word |Word On The Curb.

Referenced in Appendix Activity 5 p. 63

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0uWqV31QqLo&feature=emb_logo

“I Am America” by Sara Abou Rashed.

Referenced in Appendix Activity 5 p. 63

<https://www.pbs.org/video/i-am-america-sara-abou-rashed-awtcyo/>

National Child Traumatic Stress Network.

Referenced in Appendix Activity 6 p. 65

<https://www.nctsn.org/>

PTSD: National Center for PTSD.

Referenced in Appendix Activity 6 p. 65

<https://www.ptsd.va.gov/>

Ways Teachers Can Help Refugee Students: Some Suggestions.

Referenced in Appendix Activity 6 p. 65

<https://depts.washington.edu/uwhatc/PDF/TF-%20CBT/pages/3%20Psychoeducation/Ways%20Teachers%20Can%20Help%20Refugee%20Students.pdf>

Supporting Refugee Children & Youth: Tips for Educators.

Referenced in Appendix Activity 6 p. 65

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/mental-health-resources/war-and-terrorism/supporting-refugee-students>

FGM/C Prevention: A Resource for U.S. Schools.

Referenced in Appendix Activity 6 p. 66

<https://www.cgcs.org/cms/lib/DC00001581/Centricity/Domain/4/FGMC-CGCS-interactive%20final%20BW.pdf>

'This is Moises, live from Boa Vista'.

Referenced in Appendix Activity 7 p. 70

<https://www.unhcr.org/en-lk/news/stories/2019/11/5dd489274/this-is-moises-live-from-boa-vista.html>

Fleeing from your Family: Fatima's story.

Referenced in Appendix p. 70, on Activity 7

<https://asylumaccess.org/stories/mohammad/>

Bangkok's Somali refugees persecuted and living in fear.

Referenced in Appendix p. 70, on Activity 7

<https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2018/1/20/bangkoks-somali-refugees-persecuted-and-living-in-fear>