



West End Refugee Service  
*strength through support*



# HOME

A film project about asylum

**Teacher's Resource Pack**

'Home' is a series of short films which capture the fascinating stories of a number of refugees living in Newcastle upon Tyne and their experience of finding a sense of belonging in the city which has become their new home.

West End Refugee Service (WERS) encourages positive messages about asylum seekers and refugees within local communities through its education, awareness-raising and training programme.

WERS' support worker Ali, a Rwandan refugee who survived the genocide in 1994, tells his extraordinary story to hundreds of students each year. The effect on his audiences is profound. Viewpoints are challenged and minds are changed.

WERS wants more students to learn about asylum. These new films by David Campbell present the UK asylum process in a clear, concise and engaging format and give a voice to the men and women forced to flee.

In the pack there is additional material about asylum and the other work that the charity undertakes.

We hope that it will be a useful and flexible educational resource which your students will enjoy watching.

Lindsay Cross MBE  
Project Director  
West End Refugee Service

November 2013



West End Refugee Service  
strength through support



# HOME

A film project about asylum

Teacher's Resource Pack

## Raising awareness – Why make a film?

People from all backgrounds tell us how little they know about the circumstances that lead to a person being forced to leave their home country. Little is also known about the asylum process in the UK and how it affects the men, women and children whilst they await the outcome of their claim. This ignorance may result in negative attitudes towards asylum seekers, hostility, prejudice and racial harassment.

Since 1999 the WERS education, awareness-raising, and training programme has given refugees a voice whilst addressing the lack of accurate information about asylum. Over 1500 people of all ages attend a WERS session each year. Through creative and innovative teaching methods, the programme challenges the prevalent negativity surrounding this client group. By hearing refugees' and asylum seekers' stories at first hand, people of all ages become more knowledgeable and willing to promote positive messages within their communities.

*Dear Mr Ali*

*You recently came into school to talk to us about your life experience and I would like to say thank you for sharing this with us. I was very interested by what you told us and it meant a lot to me. I found it very inspiring and it proved to me that you can get through anything in life if you are strong enough. I found it amazing that you had survived everything and now live a normal life. It has shown me how insignificant our everyday worries are, living such a privileged life. I personally can't imagine being able to cope with what you have been through and it has inspired me to be positive and strong in any difficulties I now have to face.....*

Last year WERS worked in 6 secondary schools in the region and led sessions for students at both Newcastle and Northumbria Universities in a range of different subject areas including social work, geography, medicine, psychological therapies and housing and planning.

*My views and opinions regarding refugees have been changed dramatically and I am grateful to Ali*

*Everyone has a right to be happy and safe – sometimes we take these things for granted*

*This has helped me break down the stereotypes and stigmas and given me the confidence to speak up next time I hear an ignorant or racist remark*

*This session has certainly changed my personal views and values  
I've learned how important it is to help people feel a sense of belonging and worth*

Awareness-raising is only a part of WERS' programme of activities supporting asylum seekers and refugees. WERS had been looking at different ways of reaching a wider audience of school and university students when Newcastle University approached the charity with the film project proposal. Everyone at WERS was excited at the prospect of working with a professional film maker.

WERS is most grateful to film maker David Campbell and Newcastle University for making the film project a reality. We are delighted with the films and very proud of the clients, staff and volunteers who took part!

Lindsay Cross

### **A highly innovative collaboration**

Newcastle University has been privileged to work with West End Refugee Service and talented film maker David Campbell throughout the two years that have seen this project come to fruition.

As a civic university, and under the auspices of the University's Institute for Social Renewal, this collaboration has provided Newcastle University with the opportunity to fulfil its ambitions to work meaningfully with the community of which we are a part.

We would like to thank the participants in the films for their willingness to share their stories and for having the courage to help others understand their life experiences. We would also like to thank Lindsay Cross and David Campbell for their vision and commitment to the project.

The films provide a wonderful resource to challenge misconceptions and prejudice about refugees and asylum seekers and we are determined that successful collaborations like this one should inform and be the basis for further work with WERS and with other similar organisations.

Dr Simon Philpott, Newcastle University.



West End Refugee Service  
*strength through support*



# HOME

A film project about asylum

Teacher's Resource Pack

## The Films

The refugees in the films were all sent through the Home Office dispersal programme to live in Newcastle as asylum seekers and all have chosen to stay in the city after being granted leave to remain in the UK. There are a number of optimistic common threads which run through the different films: these men and women have all come through initial rough patches and reached a time in their lives where they feel safe and more settled. All have noticed a change for the better in the city of Newcastle that they now call home.

### Film 1 Motion graphics

This animated film explains why people have to flee their homes and seek asylum in other countries. It provides statistics on the global context, details the process in the United Kingdom, and provides the story of Ayesha and her experience seeking sanctuary in Newcastle with the assistance of the West End Refugee Service.



### Film 2 Masamba Dadou Mayele

had to seek asylum in the UK and has been granted refugee status. Masamba is the lead singer in "Kilimanjaro." In this film he discusses some of his background, what it was like being sent to Newcastle, his experience settling in the city, and how he thinks of home.



### Film 3 - Evelyne Mbatkop Nana

a refugee from Cameroon works as Clothing Store supervisor at the West End Refugee Service in Newcastle. Her experience of the UK asylum process was particularly tough and included a period in a detention centre with her 2 year old son.



### Film 4 - Janet and Khirad

Janet volunteers for the West End Refugee service as a befriender. In this film Janet discusses her role and we meet her current friend, Khirad, who talks about her experiences with Janet and in Newcastle.



### Film 5 - Musa Hassan Ali

Ali, a Rwandan refugee, came to West End Refugee Service initially as a client and later joined the staff team as a support worker. The longest of the films, Ali's story is in 6 parts as he eloquently tells his poignant story.



Part 1 Did you grow up in Rwanda?

Part 2 Why did you have to leave Rwanda?

Part 3 How did you get to Europe?

Part 4 How did you end up in Newcastle?

Part 5 What is it like to live in Newcastle now?

Part 6 Where is home for you?



West End Refugee Service  
strength through support



# HOME

A film project about asylum

Teacher's Resource Pack

## FACTSHEET: Asylum seekers and refugees

If someone is at risk of being persecuted in their own country, they may go abroad and ask for asylum in another country. Granting 'asylum' means giving someone permission to remain in another country because of that risk of persecution.

In legal terms, a person who has asked for asylum in the UK and is waiting for a decision on that claim is called an **asylum seeker**. Someone who has received a positive decision on his or her asylum claim is called a **refugee**.

Anyone seeking protection is entitled to stay in the UK while awaiting a decision on their asylum claim.

The right to claim asylum is in international law. Governments are obliged to provide protection to people who meet the criteria for asylum. The UK has signed these international laws and they are part of UK legislation.

The word refugee is in common use. Many understand it to mean someone who is fleeing serious danger at home, whether that danger be war, famine, political persecution or a natural disaster. Under international law, however, the word 'refugee' has a very precise meaning: *'someone who is forced to flee their own country, who escapes to another country and is given refugee status by the government there. To qualify for refugee status, the person has to prove that they cannot return home, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion.'*

This quote is taken from the 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. The convention was drafted in the context of the millions of refugees in post-war Europe, and only applied to European nationals. In 1967, a UN protocol extended the convention to cover any person, anywhere in the world, at any time. These two documents remain the foundation of refugee law today.

Many of the refugees who come to the UK are far removed from the traditional image of a poverty-stricken, homeless, bundle carrying figure. Some may be from a rural farming background but others are highly educated, urban professionals: doctors, lawyers, business owners and engineers. As an Afghan in Leeds was told:

*'You don't look like a refugee'. Was this just because of his appearance or because he could also speak good English?*

The fear of persecution can induce a great deal of stress. Many refugees have experienced physical persecution to varying degrees. Some have been imprisoned in harsh conditions, others have been subjected to the most horrific forms of torture. The humiliation people have suffered may have a long-term effect on their sense of personal worth or ability to make decisions and organise their lives, especially in a foreign environment.

*'Every day I wonder whether I will find out about my case. Sometimes I feel very depressed because I fear that I will be refused. Then my life will change all over again. It is terrible waiting because you cannot plan your future.'*

Refugees have made a massive cultural, social and economic contribution to life in the UK in the last 450 years, despite often negative government and popular responses. Giving them support and opportunities will enable the refugees of tomorrow to enrich our society as the refugees of yesterday have done before them.