

MIGRANTS

Refugees and asylum seekers

Since 1951, the word 'refugee' has had a precise meaning in international law, under the Geneva Convention of that year. An applicant for refugee status must be outside his or her own country, have a well-founded fear of persecution there on grounds of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, and be unable to return home.

Once admitted with refugee status, a person has the right not to be sent back to their former country. Refugees have other important rights, too, including rights of access to education, health treatment and housing.

An 'asylum seeker' is a person who has lodged a claim for asylum (protection from danger) and is awaiting a decision. Some ask for asylum immediately on arrival (which they have to do if they are to be qualified for benefits), but others, fearing instant refusal, may enter as visitors or students, hoping to change their status later.

Worldwide, the number of people seeking refuge from danger has increased enormously over the last 25 years, from about 16 million in 1980 to over 200 million in 2005. Some 40 million have been forcibly displaced. Many do not satisfy the Geneva Convention's rules for seeking asylum; they are often fleeing civil wars, failed states, or environmental crises such as floods or droughts. Most refugees are from poor countries experiencing conflict and abuse of human rights, and most are admitted by other poor countries. Attitudes hostile to refugees and asylum-seekers influence the general public and are difficult to counter.

Migrants, emigrants and immigrants

A migrant is a person who moves from one country to another, intending to settle temporarily or permanently in the place of destination. An emigrant is one who leaves a country intending to settle elsewhere, while an immigrant is a person arriving in a country, intending to settle temporarily or permanently. (www.cre.gov.uk)

Explain the following terms in English -

- refugee
- persecution
- race
- religion
- asylum
- immigrant
- emigrant
- migrant
- forcibly displaced

Robert, who died aged 80 in 2005 was a Jewish Refugee.

I came to Britain in December 1938 from Vienna when I was 14. I was on the second of the Kindertransport trains organised by people in Britain, who persuaded the Home Office to allow 10,000 children to be brought to this country.

I can still remember feeling terribly disturbed, but, as a 14-year-old, to some extent the excitement of going to a different country outweighed the sense of foreboding. Some 65% of the so-called Kinder transportees lost their parents. I was one of those, although I had lost my father when I was 10, and I had no brothers or sisters either. We arrived at Harwich from the Hook of Holland. When we trooped onto the deck, there were immigration officials waiting to deal with us. Hundreds of us were put on a train to a disused holiday camp near Lowestoft. It was December, and we were in these wooden chalets, with the North Sea wind howling at us. Scarlet fever broke out and, of course, I caught it. So, I spent the next six weeks in an isolation hospital in Colchester. Then I was sent to a convalescence home in Walton, and from there to another refugee children's home in Clacton. I had a grounding in English because I had been to a grammar school in Vienna. There was a job advertised which said someone with a fair knowledge of English could be trained as a chauffeur, to look after the car and work as a handyman around the house and garden. I took the job, but it was a disaster. I was 15, thrown in the deep end, and I didn't make a good job of it. Within three weeks, I was kicked out. I was described to the refugee committee as indolent and insolent, a nice alliteration, but not very pleasant.

The one good thing was that I was told about a house where a Zionist committee had established a training farm. I used to go there to relax and meet fellow refugees. One Sunday, they had an open day for well-wishers and supporters, and I got talking to some people from London. They were very kind, working-class East Enders, Jewish people. When they heard my story, they took me in, and I lived with them in Hackney for the next eight years. That was a real stroke of luck, otherwise God knows what would have happened to me, psychologically.

The family was in the tailoring trade. So I went into that. But I wasn't very good at it, and in the war I retrained as an engineer, working for two firms making products for aircraft.

I got married at 23, and we lived in a sort of slum near Stamford Hill there was a grievous housing shortage. Eventually, I decided to study and I went to Birkbeck, and then to King's College, London, to take a history degree. I became a teacher and, after several years, a writer of history books.

I became a British citizen in 1949. I had some friends who went back to Austria, but I never really thought about going back, because I discovered how the Austrians had behaved during the war. I did think about going to Israel at one point, but I am too much of a well, I wouldn't say coward, but it would take such an effort to take root again in a totally strange environment, and learn a new language.

I'm not sure how much at home or settled I feel here, even now. Although I am hugely interested in British literature, history and politics, there are parts of the British way of life that are barriers. I am not at all interested in sport, and I hate drinking beer, so they are two fairly huge social handicaps.

Read the text and answer the questions

- Why does the author criticise the decision of Richmond Council?
- Why - in author's opinion - is the policy of diversity not applied consistently or logically? Give examples from the text.
- What cannot we guess from the ethnicity of people we meet?
- Why does the author think that our identities are open-ended?

In January this year, Richmond Council issued a court order to remove a child from the care of her foster parents after she had been living with them for two years. The council admitted that the foster parents had an exemplary record as carers and that the young girl had 'blossomed' in their custody. However, the child is black and they are white. The council thought she was better suited to a family with whom she could 'culturally identify'.

This barely received any media mention because it is a common occurrence. Britain needs an extra ten thousand foster parents but authorities actively discourage cross-cultural care; it is viewed as potentially damaging for the child. The British Association for Adoption and Fostering explains: 'It is best for a child to live with foster carers who reflect and understand the child's heritage, ethnic origin, culture and language'. Of course a vulnerable child should be placed in a home where he or she can be understood and feel comfortable, but in the case of the foster parents from Richmond, it was clear that this was already the case. It is almost as if the authorities believed the girl was born with a cultural identity programmed into her DNA, which prevented her from making any meaningful connection with white people.

What is striking about this story, and many like it, is the casual inference of a divide between black and white culture, and the assumption that this cannot be transcended. Official support for 'diversity' in the UK has spawned a massive infrastructure of policies, funding streams, services, voluntary and semi-governmental organisations and professionals, all of which are deployed to manage our differences and ensure they are recognised.

The policy of diversity is not applied consistently or logically. Over-anxious officials are keen to support the cultural identities of ethnic groups but feel distinctly uncomfortable about doing the same for white people. Such double standards reveal the motivations behind diversity policies - an elite anxiety about ordinary people. It is assumed we need 'diversity management' because otherwise we will descend into race riots. These worries are invariably exaggerated. Local councils who banned the flying of the St George's flag during the European Football Championship in 2004 finally had to overturn their decisions when complaints mounted - many from Asian taxi drivers who wanted to fly it themselves.

As more diversity policies are implemented, society seems to become more fragmented. The instinct to look after one's own tends to pit people against each other, creating an unhealthy animosity.

The problem with 'diversity' is the message it sends out. Of course we should appreciate our diverse cultural heritage. But in our day-to-day lives, especially at the beginning of the twenty-first century, our ethnicity tells us increasingly little about who we are. How could anyone sum up Asians in a nutshell? When we meet an individual, it is almost impossible to guess by their ethnicity whether they will be religious or atheist, right- or left-wing, an environmentalist or free marketeer. Our identities are open-ended. They alter and adjust to new experiences, whether these involve making new friends, developing political or religious views or even going travelling. Of course we are not just atomised individuals either, and are very much shaped by belonging to something more collective. Humans are social beings. Through knowing about ourselves we learn about each other, and vice versa. The tendency to limit 'the tribe' cuts off the chance to develop our fullest potential.

Migration and Human Rights

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Migration/Pages/MigrationAndHumanRightsIndex.aspx>

People on the move

1. An estimated 232 million people currently live outside their country of origin, many having moved ...
 2. Migration affects every region of the world, and many countries ...
 3. Large numbers of migrants today move between developing countries, and around 40 percent of the total ...
 4. Migrants are often to be found working ...
 5. While for some migration is a positive and empowering experience, far too many migrants have to ...
- A. global migrant population have moved to a neighbouring country within their region of origin.
 - B. endure human rights violations, discrimination, and exploitation.
 - C. for a variety of reasons in which the search for protection and the search for opportunity are inextricably entwined.
 - D. are now simultaneously countries of origin, destination and transit.
 - E. in jobs that are dirty, dangerous and degrading (the 3 Ds).

Contributions of migrants

Yet, migrants contribute to economic growth and human development in both home and host countries and enrich societies through cultural diversity, fostering understanding and respect among peoples, cultures and societies. Migration is also an important means for migrants and their families to improve life conditions and realize their human rights.

High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay has made promoting and protecting the human rights of all migrants a priority of the work of her office (OHCHR). “The protection of migrants is an urgent and growing human rights challenge. Governments have obligations to ensure that xenophobic violence, racism and related intolerance against migrants and their communities have no place in their societies,” she says.

Human rights violations against migrants, including denial of access to fundamental economic and social rights such as the right to education or the right to health, are often closely linked to discriminatory laws and practice, and to deep-seated attitudes of prejudice and xenophobia against migrants.

Answer the following questions:

- 1) Do final destination countries benefit from the presence of immigrants? If yes, in what ways?
- 2) What does OHCHR stand for?
- 3) Are there still any discriminatory laws in “our” country and other Western countries? If yes, introduce them or their logic.
- 4) Explain the notions of prejudice and xenophobia – where do they “come from”?

A human rights approach to migration

A human rights approach to migration places the migrant at the centre of migration policies and management, and pays particular attention to the situation of marginalised and disadvantaged groups of migrants. Such an approach will also ensure that migrants are included in relevant national action plans and strategies, such as plans on the provision of public housing or national strategies to combat racism and xenophobia.

Human rights mechanisms, such as the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants and the Committee on Migrant Workers, have been clear in stating that *although countries have a sovereign right to determine conditions of entry and stay in their territories, they also have an obligation to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of all individuals under their jurisdiction, regardless of their nationality or origin and regardless of their immigration status.*

Translate the parts in italics

Humanitarian principles (fill in the missing words)

Humanitarian pertains to the practice of saving lives and It is usually related to emergency response whether in the case of a natural disaster or a such as war or other armed conflict. Humanitarian principles govern the way humanitarian response is carried out.

Core humanitarian principles

1. Humanity - the principle of humanity means that humankind shall be treated humanely in all circumstances by saving lives and alleviating suffering, while ensuring
2. Impartiality - provision of humanitarian assistance must be and not based on nationality, race, religion, or political point of view. It must be based on need alone.
3. Independence - humanitarian agencies must formulate and implement their own policies independently of or actions.
4. Neutrality - for the Red Cross, neutrality means not to take sides in or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.
5. Proselytism - the provision of aid must not exploit and be used to further political or Agencies should operate with respect to culture and custom. Humanitarian response should use and capacities as much as possible.

(www.un.org)

UNICEF

- UNICEF helps children receive the support, healthcare and education they need to survive the threats of childhood poverty - such as preventable disease or malnutrition - and grow up to become healthy adults.
- We encourage families to educate girls as well as boys, so both men and women can play a full role in family life and broader society.
- We strive to protect children from violence and abuse, and from exploitation through child labour or trafficking. We also protect children in the midst of war and natural disasters, and provide emergency assistance, usually within 48 hours.
- UNICEF supports young people, wherever they are, in making informed decisions about their own lives, and strives to build a world in which all children live in dignity and security.
- UNICEF is the leading children's organisation, reaching children in more than 150 countries around the world. We work with local communities, organisations and governments to make a lasting difference to children's lives.
- UNICEF believes that every child should have clean water, food, health care, education, and a safe environment in which to grow up. UNICEF upholds the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and works to hold the international community responsible for their promises to children.
- UNICEF is not funded by the UN. Instead, we rely on voluntary donations to fund our work for children worldwide.

(www.unicef.org)



A. GENERAL INFORMATION

Every refugee camp is different because every situation is different.

Population

The number of people living in a camp depends on the crisis itself. When the number of refugees is in the hundreds of thousands, a few smaller camps with a population of no more than 20,000 are established rather than one big camp. In smaller camps it is easier to manage problems such as fire, security or the spreading of diseases.

Location

Camps are usually situated on the edges of towns or cities, away from borders and war zones.

Length of Stay

Camps should be only temporary solutions, giving refugees a place to live until they can safely return to their country. They are not meant to become permanent homes or settlements. However, refugees often have to live in the camps for much longer than expected.

In Albania, refugees from Kosovo lived in camps for only three months, while refugees from Somalia have been living in camps in Kenya since 1991.

Camp advantages

- Provide protection
- Easier to find out how many people live there, and what they need
- Some basic services are easier to organize (e.g. food distribution, vaccinations)

Camp disadvantages

- Too many people increase the risk of spreading diseases
- People are dependent on aid coming to them from the world
- Isolation and not much to do
- Degradation of the surrounding environment
- Security problems within the camp

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B. ACCOMMODATION and SHELTER

Materials

Shelters for refugees are usually made of local materials such as wood, metal sheets, tree branches or plastics. When possible, refugees build their own "houses". Shelters usually have stoves for heating and cooking. In warm climates cooking facilities are often outside.

Space

The minimum shelter space recommended is 3.5 square metres per person in warm climates where cooking is done outside, and 4.5 to 5.5 square metres in cold climates where indoor kitchen and bathing facilities are needed. The minimum distance between shelters should be two metres.

Tents

In emergency situations or if local materials are not available, tents are often used. Refugees should be able to stand in all areas of the tent without hitting their heads on the ceiling. Tents last two to three years.

The Organisation of Shelters

The best method is to organize the camp into smaller units where each unit has its own community facilities such as toilets (latrines), water-points and washing areas.

C. DRINK

Quantity

It depends on the climate and on the habits of the population. In order to survive, people need to drink 4 to 5 litres a day. But water is also needed for cooking, washing the dishes or clothes, and personal hygiene, so ten litres per person per day is seen as the minimum.

Water Point

There should be at least one place to get water for every 200 to 250 refugees. Shelters should be no more than 100 metres from a water point.

Water Sources

Sometimes there are nearby water sources such as rivers, lakes, wells or springs. If the water source is clean (e.g. from wells or springs), it can be used without treatment. Water that comes from rivers and lakes can be contaminated and must be treated before people can use it. When water is not available nearby, it has to be transported to the camp.

Water Quality

Water can be contaminated with microorganisms that cause disease. This is why the quality of the water is as important as the quantity. In a refugee camp, where so many people live close to one another, epidemics can start easily and spread very quickly. Cholera, a disease caused by drinking contaminated water, can kill people within hours if they do not get medical help.

How water is treated

1. Sedimentation: The water is stored for a few hours so that the biggest particles can settle to the bottom.
2. Filtration: It is then necessary to get rid of the small, invisible particles by filtering the water through sand filters.
3. Chlorination: The last step is chlorination. This is done by adding a chlorine solution to the water which kills all the microorganisms.

D. FOOD

When people have to leave their homes quickly, they usually do not have time to take food with them. This is why refugees must be able to get things to eat when they arrive in a camp.

Food needs

Depending on the region and their eating habits, families are usually given basic ingredients such as corn, grains, beans, oil, sugar, and salt. For cooking, they may find wood around the camp to build fires, and they use cooking utensils that they have brought with them or received from aid agencies. The minimum recommended daily ration is 2,100 calories per person.

Example of a recommended ration

Commodity	Recommended Ration (grams per person per day)
Cereal (e.g. rice or wheat)	400
Pulse (e.g. beans or lentils)	60
Oil/Fat (vegetable/butter oil)	25
Sugar	15
Salt	5

Storing food

Food is usually stored in one large tent. This tent should be situated near administrative offices for reasons of security, and also near the entrance of the camp so that supply lorries do not have to drive through the camp.

Food Distribution Point

Food distribution can be done at one place or divided into several ones. Refugees are given food which lasts for a week or even a month so that they do not have to wait for it every day. The camp is divided so food is distributed to different people on different days to avoid long queues and chaos.

E. HEALTH

Hospital

Some refugee camps have good and well-equipped hospitals where doctors are able to deliver babies or even operate. If refugees can go to a hospital in the host country, the camp will not build its own. A hospital usually serves a population of 200,000 (or one hospital per ten refugee camps).

Health Post

In a camp there are usually smaller health posts established, each for 3,000 to 5,000 refugees. Nurses provide treatment for things such as sore throats, fevers and cuts. Serious cases are sent to the main health centre.

Toilets (Latrines)

Ideally there should be one latrine per family. If public latrines are used, there should be at least one for every twenty people. When there is no organized way to go to the bathroom at the beginning, people usually go to the "toilet" anywhere around the refugee camp. But the human waste can cause the spread of many infectious diseases, so it is necessary to organize a waste disposal system immediately. Latrines should be at least 6 metres away from homes, but not further than 60 m. For privacy, mud, bricks and other materials are used to build a roof and walls around the latrine.

Diseases

There are two categories of disease that usually appear in a refugee camp. The most common non-epidemic diseases are malnutrition (when people do not have enough food), breathing problems and malaria. But there are also deadly diseases that can turn into epidemics such as cholera. Cholera is a disease that people can get by drinking contaminated water or eating contaminated food. Without quick treatment, about 50 percent of people who get cholera will die of dehydration.



F. EDUCATION

Education should be provided in a camp because it's very important for children to have a sense of normalcy. The international community should support refugee education in those countries where the host government is unable to do so by helping local schools and/or by establishing a system of refugee schools. There should be one school per sector of the camp (about 5,000 people).

Advantages of Education

- Education protects children who are refugees.
- Education helps to meet the needs of children and is a way of promoting their future development.
- Schools and pre-schools have an important role because young children can play here.
- The early weeks and months in a refugee camp are characterised by a sense of shock, which can be followed by a sense of depression and resignation. Going to school helps to restore a sense of purpose in children's lives. Refugees themselves almost always identify education as one of the main priorities.
- Education gives children the opportunity to discuss their experiences of violence, danger or having no home. By doing this they develop an understanding of these events.

Refugee Curriculum

A recent review of UNHCR's Refugee Education Activities noted that the curriculum in refugee schools should also include topics specific to the refugees' situation such as:

peace education, conflict resolution, human rights, the environment, health issues (including sex education and drug abuse), an introduction to the host country culture.