

# Teacher Resources

## Why teach about refugees?

Despite the concentration of media articles relating to refugees and people seeking asylum, many people are unaware of who refugees are and the reasons as to why they flee. In some cases, the media misrepresents refugees and people seeking asylum, perpetuating harmful stereotypes, myths and misunderstandings. Education is the key to addressing this. It is important that students understand the contemporary issues surrounding refugees in a time where one in 100 people in the world has been forced to flee persecution, violence or war.

Refugee Week is a pertinent time to creatively address the issues and debates regarding refugees with your students. It is also a good time to encourage your students to host their Refugee Week event or activity.

It may be difficult for students to comprehend the complexity of refugee issues. It is important to humanise the issue and bring it 'closer to home' by using specific examples and stories. This can be done by reading or watching personal narratives or look at photography. Building upon student's knowledge of refugees should also encourage empathy and tolerance of others.

## Looking at definitions and stereotypes

Before moving onto analytical activities or discussions, it is important to establish the key definitions with students. The following activities are examples of strategies for helping students to understand who refugees are and the differences between people seeking asylum, refugees and migrants.

### Activity 1: Moving

Working in pairs, ask students to write down as many reasons as you can why people move away from their homes. Now sort the reasons into two columns: Reasons people move voluntarily, and reasons people move against their will.

Discuss your lists with the whole group This activity will help students to understand the difference between a migrant and a refugee.

### Activity 2: Definitions

This activity works well for small groups. The group, pair or individual will need A4 paper, poster size paper, pens, access to research material and the information sheeting giving the UN definitions of a refugee, asylum seeker, internally displaced persons and Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. First, without using the resources, ask each group to work on a definition of the word 'refugee'. Get students to write their ideas of paper. Display them and compare them with the definition from the rest of the class. Then, ask each group to research the word 'refugee' using as many of the information sources available to them. Get them to display their work on poster size sheets. This activity aims to give a clear understanding of the definitions used by the UN in their work with refugees. The differences are important because different groups have different rights under international law.

### Activity 3: Refugees in the media

This activity is more applicable to secondary students. After exploring and researching key definitions, students collect news items from television, newspaper or radio sources which mention refugees. In class, or in smaller groups, they can discuss what attitudes are evident towards refugees and people seeking asylum. Is the word 'refugee' always applied correctly? Why or why not? Inspiration taken from the Global Education website; however, this example has been modified.

## Lessons Plans and Teaching Resources

**Amnesty International Australia**'s website has a great deal of information on refugees, people seeking asylum and human rights in general. It also contains lesson ideas relating to border security and fleeing from persecution to freedom using methods such as role-play, card games, group work and board games. Their website "Rethink Refugees" includes personal stories of refugees who sought asylum or were resettled in Australia, alongside other information.

<https://www.amnesty.org.au/?s=lesson+plans>

**The Asylum Seekers and Refugees Education Resource** (Updated 2019) is the Edmund Rice Centre's publication, which converts years of their research and experience into curriculum support material that addresses the learning needs of students.

This free 64-page Education Resource offers 42 cross-curricular activities which are practical, engaging and focused on increasing awareness about human rights and advocacy. The activities are adaptable to all year levels in secondary school and some can also be used with primary classes, students with special needs and could also be used in community group discussions.

Students are encouraged to think about refugees and people seeking asylum with compassion, to move their understanding from the head to the heart.

To download this Education Resource and the Flyer, go to:  
[www.erc.org.au/Resources for Schools/Asylum Seekers and Refugees](http://www.erc.org.au/Resources_for_Schools/Asylum_Seekers_and_Refugees)

**The Australian Human Rights Commission** has a range of educational resources on multiculturalism, racism and diversity.

<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/>

**The NSW Teachers Federation** has library resources on anti-racism and issues relate to refugees and people seeking asylum. Download these resources at:

<https://www.nswtf.org.au/anti-racism-policy>

**Centre for Multicultural Youth (CMY)** publishes information sheets on issues affecting young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds. The sheets include a brief guide to meaningful consultation with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. CMY also provides toolkits and information sheets that highlight good practice principles in building relationships with newly arrived and refugee

communities, as well as strategies to support engagement through sports and recreation. These strategies could be used to help conduct community events for Refugee Week. Check out the 'Information Sheets', 'Training and Resource Kits' and 'Involving Migrant and Refugee Young People in Social and Recreational Activities'

<http://www.cmy.net.au/Publications>

The "Racism. No Way" website, which supplies anti-racism lessons and resources for Australian schools, has an incredible range of lesson plans and student worksheets ready for download. Lesson topics include racism, prejudice, cultural diversity, identity, language, migration and refugees.

<https://www.racismnoway.com.au/teaching-resources/anti-racism-activities/>

The **Choices Program** website provides teaching materials based on refugee stories called 'Mapping a Crisis'. These materials explore the human geography of the current refugee crisis, use data to create a map of the crisis, examine a personal story of one refugee and map his/her experiences, and consider challenges facing the international community and weigh responses to the crisis. The Choices Program website has a large number of resources on teaching about the global refugee crisis.

<https://www.choices.edu/teaching-news-lesson/refugee-stories-mapping-crisis/>

**World Vision's** website provides quick and easy access to a range of issue-based resources including material and lesson plans on refugee issues, child rights, citizenship, gender, health, environment and others. Here you will find information on the refugee journey, voluntary and forced migration, personal stories, as well as, a lesson plan for exploring the topic of migration and refugees

<https://www.worldvision.com.au/get-involved/school-resources/search-results?topic=refugees>

A large range of resources are available from the **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)** office in London, including teacher's guides and lesson plans, videos, booklets and posters.

<https://www.unhcr.org/uk/search?query=Lesson%20plans>

## Refugee Related Books

### Books for young children

**Caroline Castle (in conjunction with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) – For Every Child:** For Every Child is a picture book which details the 15 most important rights of the child. Each right has a specific illustration in a different style by a different artist around the world. This could lead to a discussion about why people may have to flee from their own country.

**Czenya Cavouras – Rainbow Bird:** Rainbow Bird is a deeply moving childrens picture book written and illustrated by 14 year old Czenya Cavouras. Everyone who has had anything to do with refugees and people seeking asylum will want to read this book. It tells the story of a refugee journey from a destroyed homeland to a desolate detention centre and finally, to future of hope. Rainbow Bird is quietly harrowing, has a unique author voice, and is ultimately inspiring and uplifting. (From Australians against Racism – AAR)

**David Miller – Refugees:** In David Miller's book, two wild ducks become refugees when their swamp is drained. Their journey in search of a new place to live exposes them to danger, rejection and violence before they are given a new home. Their story is told with brightly coloured three-dimensional paper sculptures in this attractive picture book for young children.

**Susan Gervay and Anna Pignataro – Ships in the Field:** Written and illustrated by the children of refugees, this warmly told and illustrated book follows a young girl who is herself the child of those who have fled war and trauma. The book uses this young girl's desire for a dog to explore a deeper longing for connection in a new land in a touching story of loss, migration, hope and home.

**Nam Le – The Boat, 2009, Penguin Australia:** The Boat is an imaginative and poignant fiction book that takes the reader on a journey from the slums of Colombia to the streets of Tehran and from the lane ways in New York to Iowa City to a small fishing village in Australia to the South China Sea. At its core, it's a graphic novel about escape after the Vietnam War as written by Nam Le and adapted by Matt Huynh.

**Angela Neustatter and Helen Elliot – Refugee:** It happened to me: This book features extended interviews with six children and young adults who are refugees or seeking asylum. They came from various countries including Kosovo, Somalia, Afghanistan and Romania. The interviews are carefully constructed to cover both the emotional as well as the practical consequences of their refugee experiences. The aim is not to be sensational but empathetic and informative. Talking points and black and white photographs are also included.

**Deborah Ellis – Children of war: Iraqi refugees speak:** Written five years after the United States and its allies invaded Iraq – but with true democracy still out of sight – Deborah Ellis turns her attention to the war's most tragic victims: Iraqi children. She interviews more than 20 young Iraqis, mostly refugees living in Jordan.

**Sybella Wilkes – One Day We Had To Run!** Refugee children tell their stories in words and paintings. This book tells the stories of three children who were forced to become refugees. The children's stories and paintings are set against background information about Somalia, Sudan and Ethiopia, which helps to explain why refugees have been forced to flee from these countries. The roles of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Save the Children are outlined, and ideas for using this book in the school classroom are also included.

## For primary school students

**Armin Greder – The Island:** This book is a metaphorical account of the way in which prejudice and fear create artificial barriers between people which they use to exclude others in order to 'protect' themselves. It offers reasons for why refugees exist and why detention centres and refugee camps have become so prevalent throughout the world.

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/discipline/english/literacy/reading/viewing/Pages/exampleteachlearncyclelevel56.aspx>

**Rosanne Hawke – Soraya the Storyteller:** Aimed at upper primary students, this story tells of 11 year old Soraya. Soraya is an asylum seeker from Afghanistan living under the shadow of Australia's

former temporary protection visa system. As she adapts to life in Australia, she is haunted by both her father's absence and the fear that she may have to return to Afghanistan. To console herself, she begins writing stories.

**John Heffernan – My Dog:** My Dog is a very moving, understated story in picture book format suitable for 8 – 12 years old. Seen through the eyes of a young boy, it tells of the terrible suffering as a consequence of ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia. This book would serve as a moving introduction to discussion on human rights and suffering.

**Wendy Orr – Across the Dark Sea:** Released by the National Museum of Australia, this book follows Trung as he is separated from his family and travels by boat from Vietnam to Australia. It also explores his experience adapting to Australian life. The National Museum of Australia has provided some discussion questions and classroom activities to accompany the book.

<https://www.nma.gov.au/learn/classroom-resources/making-tracks/across-the-dark-sea>

## For young adults

**Alwyn Evans – Walk in My Shoes:** Aimed at secondary students, this book tells of an Afghan refugee, Gulnessa, who struggles to establish a life for herself and her family in Australia. They are confined in a detention centre for asylum seekers and forced to prove their refugee status.

**Beverley Naidoo – The Other Side of Truth Aimed at teenager:** this topical novel is set during 1995 in the aftermath of Ken Saro-Wiwa's execution in Nigeria for alleged political crimes. The Other Side of Truth tackles multiple themes, most importantly injustice, the right to freedom of speech, the complexities of political asylum, bullying and, ultimately, the strength of the family

**Leon Rosselson – Home is a Place Called Nowhere:** Suitable for teenagers, this topical, fast-paced novel deals with issues of discrimination and prejudice against refugees. Amina runs away to London after a crisis in her adoptive family, hoping to track down her mother and to discover the truth about her apparent abandonment. Paul, an older and more streetwise runaway, helps her to make contact with the refugee community. It is by listening to other people and their stories that she comes, finally, to understand her own.

**Short Stories Katherine Goode – Jumping to Heaven:** Children from Bosnia, Cambodia, El Salvador, Herzegovina, Iraq, Sudan, and Vietnam who have come to Australia to escape persecution are given a voice in this collection of short stories compiled from interviews with refugees. Recommended for children over 13 years.

**Sonja Dechian, Heather Millar and Eva Sallis – Dark Dreams:** Australian Refugee Stories by young writers aged 11-20 "These stories will remind you that these unbearable events did not happen far away, to people we pity from a distance – a view the nightly news, especially now, too easily encourages. These events and histories are carried in the heart and mind of the person next to you, these experiences are with us, beside us..." (Dr Eva Sallis, editor).

# Documentaries

**Lost Boys of Sudan (2003)** <http://www.lostboysfilm.com/index.html> This documentary follows two Sudanese refugees on an extraordinary journey from Africa to America. Orphaned as young boys in one of Africa's most vicious civil wars, Peter Dut and Santino Chuor survived lion attacks and militia gunfire to reach a refugee camp in Kenya along with thousands of other children. From there, remarkably, they were chosen to come to America. Safe at last from physical danger and hunger, a world away from home, they find themselves confronted with the abundance and alienation of contemporary American suburbia.

**Steve Thomas (2008)** Hope is the story of Amal Basry, one of 400 Iraqi refugees on the ill-fated SIEV X, which sank between Indonesia and Australia and killed 353 people. Amal was one of only seven survivors who made it to Australia. Now she fights to reunite her family, and to ensure that this disaster is not forgotten.

**New Year Baby - Socheata Poeuv (2008)** <http://newyearbaby.net/> Born in a Thai refugee camp on the Cambodian New Year, documentary filmmaker Socheata Poeuv grew up in the United States never knowing that her family had survived the Khmer Rouge genocide. In this documentary, she embarks on a journey to Cambodia in search of the truth and why her family's history had been buried in secrecy for so long.

<http://www.newyearbaby.net/educators/>

**Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars (2005)** <http://www.refugeeallstars.org/> Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars documents a band of six Sierra Leonean musicians who came together while living in a refugee camp in Guinea. Despite the unimaginable horrors of civil war, they were saved and brought hope and happiness to other refugees through their music. Also see the website for background information on Sierra Leone.

<http://www.rosebudus.com/refugeeallstars/biography.html>.

# Online stories

**SBS's "How Far We've Come"** website This great website explores the lives of refugees in Australia over time. It includes stories of refugees first interviewed by SBS up to 25 years ago, to find out what has happened in their lives since. Each story also has an accompanying Facts Page that briefly explains the history and conditions in the person's country of origin.

[www.sbs.com.au/refugees](http://www.sbs.com.au/refugees).

# Blogs

**Mary meets Mohammad (2013)** - Heather Kirkpatrick This film looks at the other side of the refugee and political situation in Australia regarding the refugee issue. It looks at what happens

when refugees arrive in Australia and are sent to detention centres, often for quite a few years before they learn their fate. The film covers the unlikely friendship that is formed between local residents in Tasmania after the Australian government's surprise announcement in 2011 to build Tasmania's first asylum seeker detention centre in Pontville. It shows the varied responses the locals have to the establishment of the centre within their locality and the connection the Mary, a local Christian, elderly woman forms with a Muslim refugee named Mohammad.

<https://marymeetsmohammad.com>

## Online Games

**UNHCR's "Against All Odds"** is an online simulation game for High School students. In the game, students follow a young person's flight from oppression in his/her home country to exile in an asylum country. The game is intended to increase students' awareness and knowledge about refugees – where they come from, what situations they have faced and how they adapt to their new lives. There is a teacher's guide with suggested lessons plans to accompany every level of the game.

<http://www.playagainstallodds.ca/>

**SBS's "Exit Australia"** is a simulation which puts you directly in the shoes of a person seeking asylum and exposes you to some of the difficult situations and decisions that are faced by people who are forced to flee their home country. Along the way you will face danger and injustice, corruption and bureaucracy, but also find opportunities for kinship and cooperation.

[/www.sbs.com.au/asylumexitaustralia](http://www.sbs.com.au/asylumexitaustralia)

<http://www.sbs.com.au/asylumexitaustralia/>

## Useful websites and other refugee related resources

### Useful Websites

**Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA):** RCOA is the national umbrella advocacy body working on refugee issues in Australia. All information relating to Refugee Week 2019 will be posted on the Council's website as it becomes available and will include a poster to download, a Calendar of Events which will be updated regularly, and other information to assist community groups and others in their planning for Refugee Week 2019.

[www.refugeecouncil.org.au](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au)

[www.refugeeweek.org.au](http://www.refugeeweek.org.au)

**Amnesty International Australia:** Amnesty International Australia's website provides detailed

information and research relating to human rights issues, refugees and people seeking asylum in Australia.

<http://www.amnesty.org.au/refugees/>

**Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC):** The ASRC website offers information about issues facing people seeking asylum and the current asylum-seeking debate. As well as a comprehensive 'Myth Busters' page, and current campaigns, there are also personal stories from people seeking asylum. Have a look at: <http://www.asrc.org.au//>

**Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC):** Australian Human Rights Commission offers general information about human rights in relation to refugees and people seeking asylum. A range of reports and publications are also available, most of which are in regard to Immigration Detention.

<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/>

**The Australian Red Cross:** The Australian Red Cross website has a FAQs section, a Newsroom page, and a Library resource. The International Committee of the Red Cross website has an extensive photographic library which can be used for school projects and presentations. Please be sure to acknowledge the ICRC if you use any images. Go to [www.redcross.org.au](http://www.redcross.org.au) for the Australian Red Cross and [www.icrc.org](http://www.icrc.org) for The International Committee of the Red Cross.

**Catholic Australia:** Catholic Australia's website provides position papers about issues affecting people seeking asylum and refugees in Australia.

<http://www.catholicaustralia.com.au/>

**Chilout:** A not-for-profit seeking to improve the plight of children seeking asylum in Australia, Chilout has a wealth of information and research on children in detention.

<http://www.chilout.org/home>.

**Foundation House:** The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture This website offers lots of information about the experiences of refugees and people seeking asylum, including publications, policy documents and submissions to government inquiries.

<http://www.foundationhouse.org.au/>

**NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors (STARTTS):** The Resources and Publications page of this website offers information about refugees in Australia and worldwide, particularly focusing on issues of torture and trauma. Resources include research papers, policy submissions, community information and their regular magazine 'Refugee Transitions', which covers a wealth of national and international issues affecting refugees.

[www.startts.org.au](http://www.startts.org.au)

**SBS: “How Far We’ve Come” and “Go back to where you came from.”:** This website by SBS explores the lives of refugees in Australia over time. It includes stories of refugees first interviewed by SBS up to 25 years ago, to find out what has happened in their lives since. Each story also has an accompanying Facts Page that briefly explains the history and conditions in the person’s country of origin. Check out: [www.sbs.com.au/refugees](http://www.sbs.com.au/refugees). “Go back to where you came from” is a website based around the four part television series following the journey of six ordinary Australians who agreed to challenge their preconceptions and trace in reverse the journeys that refugees have taken to reach Australia. Episodes can be viewed online, and the website also includes factsheets, resources for schools and an interactive simulation. Visit <http://www.sbs.com.au/shows/goback>.

**The Conversation:** Asylum Seeker Section The Conversation has collected its people seeking asylum and refugee content into one place and sorted it into ‘Analysis and Comment’ and ‘Research and News’ sections. Goto: <http://theconversation.com/topics/asylum-seekers>.

**United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR):** UNHCR is the United Nations agency mandated to respond to refugee crises around the world. The UNHCR website provides a wide range of resource including up to date information, news, current statistics relating to refugees and displaced persons worldwide. It is also a fantastic source of photographs and images of refugees worldwide. Photographs are updated and change frequently. The ‘Australia for UNHCR’ website is also a great resource for teachers and students alike and includes a school curriculum that incorporates refugee and asylum seeker issues into learning. See [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org). Also take a look at the ‘Australia for UNHCR’ website at: [www.unrefugees.org.au](http://www.unrefugees.org.au).

## Refugee-related documentaries

### On Australia Refugee Policies

**Australia’s Pacific Solution - Kate Durham and Sarah McDonald (2002):** This controversial documentary explores Australia’s Pacific Solution and the involvement of Nauru as an off-shore detention centre.

**Tampa and Beyond (2002):** This documentary covers the Tampa incident, the establishment of off-shore detention centres, and explains relevant laws.

### Experiences of persecution

**In the Shadow of the Palms - Wayne Coles-Janess (2004):** In the Shadow of the Palms is a multi-award winning production that details life in Iraq before, and during, the most controversial war of the 21st Century. It provides an intimate insight into the lives of ordinary people during Saddam’s Regime as they prepare for the rapidly approaching war.

### Personal stories

**Australia Has No Winter - Amos Cohen & Sherine Salama (1999):** Stevan Arbutina, a Serb, is married to Georgia, a Croatian. They are forced to immigrate to Australia after the devastating

civil war in Yugoslavia makes it impossible for them to find peace and security in their old country. This compelling film traces the family's journey from Belgrade to Melbourne.

**War Child: Emmanuel Jal's Story (2010):** A former child soldier in Sudan, Emmanuel Jal is now an internationally acclaimed hip-hop artist who fights for peace and reconciliation in his home country. War Child intersperses original interviews, live concerts, and rare footage of Emmanuel Jal as a seven year-old boy. From child soldier to refugee lawyer: Deng Thiak Adut's inspiring journey from Sudan to Sydney (2000) Another inspiring story to come out of Sudan is that of Deng Thiak Adut. It tells the story of a former child soldier, who was taken to serve in the military by the People's Liberation Army in 1987 at just six years old. After witnessing many atrocities and being smuggled out of Sudan by his brother he arrived in Australia as a refugee in 1998. He is now a refugee lawyer working in Bankstown advising and representing Sudanese people with the court system. See:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-09-10/from-child-soldier-to-refugee-lawyer-an-inspiring-journey/6764088> and <http://www.modelsofachievement.com.au/?p=181> . Also see Deng Adut's transcript at the Australia Day lecture, which focuses on freedom from fear at: <http://www.smh.com.au/national/transcript-deng-thiak-aduts-australia-day-speech-20160121-gmau63.html>.

**Pushing the Elephant (2010):** This documentary tells the story of Rose Mapendo from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). As Rose fled the atrocities of war in DRC, she was forced to leave her five-year-old daughter, Nangabire, behind. With her other nine children, she was eventually resettled in Arizona, USA, where she works as a full-time advocate for refugees. Now, after 12 years apart, Rose and her daughter Nangabire are reunited.

**Freedom Stories (2015):** This film explores the achievements and stories of former 'boat people' who arrived in Australian waters seeking asylum from the Middle East around 2001, a defining year in Australian politics. Locked in remote detention centres then placed on TPVs, their limbo lasted years. Now Australian citizens, they are finally building secure lives and contributing to their new country.

### **Experiences of flight and refugee camps**

**Michael Camerini & Shari Robertson (2000):** This documentary tells the stories of oppression that brought political refugees to America. Even more interestingly, it looks at the system that decide who gets to stay and who gets sent back, perhaps to prison or death.

**Letters To Ali-Clara Law (2004):** This documentary tells the story of a 15-year old Afghan boy seeking asylum in Australia, and the Australian family that befriend him.

**Forgotten Refugees: the Rohingya in Bangladesh (2007):** In March 2007 Amnesty International Australia joined UNHCR, the Centre for Refugee Research, and a number of other Australian NGOs for consultations with Rohingya refugees who have fled from Burma to camps in Bangladesh. The documentary highlights the atrocious conditions faced by the 26,000 refugees, many of whom have spent over 16 years living in the camps. You can see the short film at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?gl=AU&hl=en-GB&v=lg5elXYAMbo>

**Chasing Asylum** : This film exposes the real impact of Australia's offshore detention policies and explores how 'The Lucky Country' became a country where leaders choose detention over compassion and governments deprive the desperate of their basic human rights. The film features never before seen footage from inside Australia's offshore detention camps, revealing the personal impact of sending those in search of a safe home to languish in limbo. Find screenings and more info here: <http://www.chasingasylum.com.au/>

## Experiences of resettlement and integration

**Molly & Mobarak Clips (2003):** Molly and Mobarak follows the emotional journey of Mobarak Tahiri, a young Hazara refugee from Afghanistan living on a Temporary Protection Visa, as he struggles to adjust to life in the regional NSW town of Young. Molly Rule and her mother Lyn provide friendship and support to Mobarak. The narrative centres on the interactions between the townspeople of Young and the Afghani community, through the characters of Molly and Mobarak respectively. Mobarak has escaped war, persecution and danger in his homeland, but his journey in Australia has only just begun. The website above shows clips of the documentary. See: <http://australianscreen.com.au/titles/molly-mobarak/clip3/>

**When Mary Met Mohammad (2013)** Directed by Heather Kirkpatrick: This film follows the arrival of Tasmania's first detention centre through the eyes of local Christian woman and knitting club member Mary and Muslim Afghan Hazara asylum seeker Mohammad, who is detained inside the centre, as they connect through the gift of a knitted beanie.

## Personal Stories

**Cast from the Storm (2016)** Directed by David Mason : Cast from the Storm is an award winning Australian documentary that tells a tender story of transformation, acceptance and belonging. Asfar, Maryam and Wiam face the usual challenges of navigating high school – with one difference. They were forced to leave their home countries and everything they knew behind. Now in Australia, they must start not only a new school, in a new country – but also a new life.

**Constance on the Edge (2016):** Filmed over 10 years, Constance on the Edge is an unflinchingly honest portrayal of one refugee family's resettlement story in Australia. The film is an uplifting and moving portrayal of the journey to settlement in a new and unfamiliar country, and of the Australian communities that welcome people seeking safety

**Rada Boric, Julie Mertus, Jasmina Tesanovic and Habiba Metikos – The Suitcase: Refugee Voices from Bosnia and Croatia (1997):** This is powerful collection of memoirs – including essays, letters, and poems – from refugees fleeing Bosnia and Croatia during the civil wars in the former Yugoslavia. Contributors from all ethnic groups and every region of Bosnia and Croatia describe their loved ones, their sense of community and their towns and homes that they have had to leave behind. These stories tell of perseverance, brutality, exile, and courage.

**Carina Hoang – Boat People (2011):** Boat People is beautifully designed collection of personal stories that revolve around the exodus of refugees from Vietnam between 1975 and 1996. It includes short memoirs, illustrations and photographs and reproductions of primary documents such as refugee acceptance letter and personal notes to loved ones. Carina Hoang fled Vietnam on a rickety boat at the age of sixteen, is now based in Perth where she is completing her PhD which is based on aspects of this book.

**Sarah Mares & Louise Newman (editors) - Acting From the Heart: Australian Advocates for Asylum Seekers Tell Their Stories (2007):** In this moving and inspiring collection of stories, poems and cartoons, fifty contributors describe how they became involved in supporting people seeking asylum and refugees. (To purchase, email Laura at Finch Publishing on [info@finch.com.au](mailto:info@finch.com.au)).

**China Keitetsi – Child Soldier (2004):** This is a powerful true story of Keitetsi, a child soldier who

joined the Ugandan National Resistance Army at just eight years old. Her story details the abuse she suffered at the hands of her officers and how she finally escaped to Europe to start a new life. Now living in Denmark, she is an international campaigner for child soldiers.

### **Nonfiction: educational and political commentary**

#### **Michael Leach and Fethi Mansouri – Lives in Limbo: Voices of Refugees Under**

**Temporary Protection (2004):** In this book, 35 refugees mostly from Iraq and Afghanistan talk directly about their quest for asylum in Australia. They provide poignant details of persecution in their home country, their journey to Australia, prolonged periods of mandatory detention, and life as temporary protection visa (TPV) holders.

**Caroline Moorehead - Human Cargo: A Journey Among Refugees (2005):** This book looks at 'human cargo' from Afghanistan, Liberia, Palestine and many other places. Moorehead has visited war zones, camps, prisons - and the black Dinka families from the Sudan who were resettled north of the Arctic Circle in Finland. She follows the fate of 57 young members of the Mandingo tribe, who fled ethnic cleansing and ended up happily in America via Egypt. She is shown the graves in Sicily of drowned boat people and examines the fence that has been built across Texas and into the sea to keep 35 migrants out of America. She has interviewed emigration officials in Australia and members of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in Geneva. In this book she asks the difficult questions.

**Frank Brennan - Tampering with Asylum: A Universal Humanitarian Problem (2003):** Frank Brennan wrote this book in response to the 2001 Tampa Affair, when the Norwegian freighter MV Tampa, and its cargo of rescued asylum seekers, were denied permission to dock at the nearest landfall of Christmas Island. The book compares Australia's dramatic over-reaction with the response of the United States and Europe and offers a practical blueprint for countries wanting to humanely protect asylum seekers.

**Michael Gordon – Freeing Ali: The Human Face of the Pacific Solution (2005):** Michael Gordon was the first journalist to gain unrestricted access to the refugee detention centre on Nauru. Freeing Ali tells of detainee Ali Mallaie, and follows his story from Afghanistan to Nauru, and ultimately to Melbourne. He recounts the experiences of survivors of the SIEV X tragedy and the 'children overboard' saga. At a time when the Australian government was under growing pressure for a change in policy, Gordon assesses the human and financial cost of the former Pacific Solution.

## Refugee-related movies

### **Personal or true stories**

#### **The Staging Post**

The **Staging Post** follows two Afghan Hazara refugees, Muzafar and Khadim. Stuck in Indonesia after Australia 'stopped the boats' and facing many years in limbo, they built a community and started the school which inspired a refugee education revolution.

<https://thestagingpost.com.au/>

**Michael Power, Afterglow Productions – New Land, New Life (2013):** This is a short film that tells the encouraging firsthand stories of five refugees from the Horn of Africa who settled in Australia, after escaping prosecution and violence in their own countries. It illustrates the path they followed to carve a new life for themselves in Australia and their determination to contribute to their new country. This documentary was produced by the Horn of Africa and Development Agency (HARDA) and funded by Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) under the Diversity and Social Cohesion Program.

[http://v2.harda.org.au/new-land-%20new-life/%20&%20https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a0TZ\\_iRsV4s](http://v2.harda.org.au/new-land-%20new-life/%20&%20https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a0TZ_iRsV4s)

**Jessie Taylor, David Schmidt – Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea (2012):** This is a feature documentary that sets out the journey across the globe of one Afghani family's search for freedom through the eyes of their 9 year-old daughter, Zainab. It shows how her family put the fate of their lives in the hands of strangers and illustrates the path they and many others have taken in the hope of living a life free from prosecution and violence.

<https://documentaryaustralia.com.au/news/between-the-devil-and-the-deep-blue-sea/>

**Go Back to Where You Came From (2011) (2012) (2013):** This is an award-winning Australian TV documentary series that follows the stories of two separate parties, each consisting of six Australians tracing in reverse the journeys that refugees have taken to reach Australia. It shows how they risk their lives to experience the reality of refugee life in places such as war-torn Mogadishu, Somalia, the streets of Kabul and the mountains of Afghanistan.

<http://www.sbs.com.au/programs/go-back-to-where-you-came-from>.

**Davin Anders Hutchins – The Art of Flight (2005):** This is a guerrilla documentary that was shot illegally in Egypt on camcorders and a laptop. This feature-length film tells the story of three people – a refugee from southern Sudan, a human rights activist from northern Sudan and an American journalist in self-imposed exile – all living in Cairo.

**Majid Majidi - Barefoot to Heart (2002):** This film was shot during two trips that Majid Majidi took in Western Afghanistan in 2001 and 2002. In the first trip in November 2001, Majidi visited the refugee camp of Makaki, located in a Taliban-controlled area, and Mile 46, another small camp situated in a Northern Alliance held area. The second trip took place in February 2002 in the city of Herat now freed from the Taliban and in the hunger-stricken camp of Maslakh, one of the largest in the world.

### Fiction

**Nigel Roffe-Barker - Asylum (2003):** Fleeing persecution and torture in northern Iraq, three young Kurdish boys smuggle themselves into England where they register for asylum and try to establish new lives. However, their future is threatened when their genuine claims get bound up in red tape. One boy is detained, while the others evade capture by taking refuge in a local church, amid escalating media and police attention.

**Samira Makhmalbaf - The Blackboard (2000):** This movie tells of a group of Kurdish teachers who wander from village to village in the remote Iranian Kurdistan region during the Iran-Iraq

war in search of students. They carry large blackboards on their backs, sometimes using them as shelter, camouflage and as shields for gunfire.

**Mai Masri - Frontiers of Dreams and Fears (2001):** Powerful, passionate and often disturbing, *Frontiers of Dreams and Fears* tells the heart-breaking story of two young Palestinian girls growing up in refugee camps in Beirut and Bethlehem. The film focuses on the friendship of two young girls, their daily life, their dreams, hopes and aspirations.

### Short films

**Angela Van Boxtel - The Cage House (2002):** This award-winning short movie was inspired by the drawings of 6 year old Shayan Badraie in Villawood Detention Centre. See: <http://www.abc.net.au/am/stories/s456606.htm> for more information.

### Novels

**Suzanne Fisher-Staples - Under the Persimmon Tree (2005):** This widely acclaimed novel explores the relationship between a young American woman and an Afghan girl, Najmah, who is all alone in Taliban- ruled Afghanistan. The story follows Najmah's perilous journey through the mountains in search for safety and refuge in Pakistan.

**Majok Tulba - Beneath the Darkening Sky (2012):** In Majok Tulba's debut novel, he tells the story of Obinna, whose life is forever changed when a group of rebels descend on his village. They line the children up in the middle of the village and measure them against the height of an AK-47. Those who are shorter than the gun are left behind. Those who are taller are taken. Obinna and his older brother Akot find themselves the rebel army's newest recruits. Majok Tulba himself was shorter than the AK-47 and came to Australia from South Sudan as a refugee in 2001. This is the story of what might have happened to him had he been an inch taller.