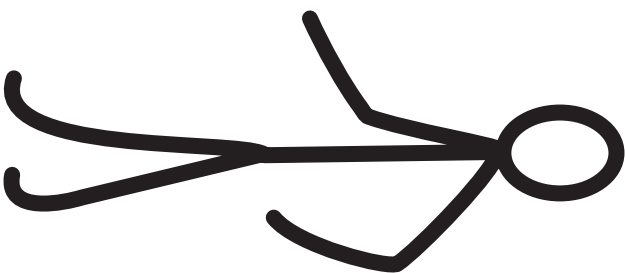


Core Activity Sheet 4.1

Tasks

1. Read through the story. As you make decisions, write down a short note to remind you what you chose and what happened to you.
2. Compare the experiences in your story with someone else in your class.
3. Did anything happen to you that did not happen to the other person?
4. What was the best experience from either of your stories?
5. What was the worst experience?
6. Can you think of anything that could have happened differently to make the experience better for the asylum seeker?
7. Compare your answer to others in the class. Can you come up with one or two simple ideas to make the asylum system better?

A Refugee's Story



Core Activity Sheet 4.2

Page 1

Detention Centre

You have been travelling for weeks. At home you had to hide yourself from the police who were searching for your parents. When you finally arrive in England the Immigration Officers look closely at your passport. When they start asking difficult questions you admit that your papers are forged and that you are a refugee, seeking somewhere safe to stay. Very quickly you are taken to one side, more questions are asked and you can't follow what's going on.

Soon, you are taken in a van to a fenced site. There are lots of other asylum seekers here, from many different countries. Conditions look basic but at least it's safe. Gradually, as the days pass you realise that you aren't allowed to leave this site...

What will you do?

1. Wait until the government offers you a house or flat. It could be in a small town hundreds of miles away where you don't know any one ... (turn to page 2).
2. Run away from the centre, to try to start on your own in a large city where you know others from your country have already settled ... (turn to page 3).

Page 10

For more information contact

The Refugee Council

www.refugeecouncil.org.uk

UNHCR United Nations High Commission for Refugees

www.unhcr.ch

Amnesty International

www.amnesty.org.uk

European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)

www.ecre.org

IAS Immigration Advisory Service

www.vois.org.uk/ias

BBC News

<http://news.bbc.co.uk>

The Home Office

www.homeoffice.gov.uk

Core Activity Sheet 4.3

Page 9

Final Outcomes

Throw a dice (or choose a card) to find out what happens to you:

1. If you passed through another country on your way to seek asylum elsewhere you may be sent back to that country. The authorities decide that you will be moved on again.
2. You have been waiting so long that the government let you stay. You have not been recognised as a genuine refugee but you have been granted Exceptional Leave to Remain.
- 3+4. The government doesn't believe your story about the dangers you face at home. They think that you only came to Europe to have a better life. You are sent home.
5. The government has taken a long time to look into your story. They realise that you are in danger if you are sent home at the moment, so they give you refugee status.
6. Things get better in your home country, so you return with your family.

Page 2

Relocation

You arrive in a small town; it's dark and grey and the weather is bad. There is lots of unemployment and the area you are in is poor and run down. You are the only foreigner in the whole street.

You can only use one local shop because the government has given you vouchers instead of cash. The shop is expensive and they don't give you change if you haven't spent all of the value of the voucher. You went there once in the evening but a group of youths were hanging around outside and they called you names as you walked past.

You have looked in the library and the phone book but you cannot find any local group to help you. You know that London has lots of people in similar situations and community groups to help each other:

What will you do?

1. Stay put – it can only get better ... (turn to page 4).
2. Move away on your own ... (turn to page 3).

Core Activity Sheet 4.4

Page 3

Homeless

You have run away, taking with you only a few pounds and a suitcase, but it's difficult to find anywhere to stay in London. You are not entitled to full benefits because you are not an official refugee – you don't know who to see for help. You spend your first night sleeping rough in a quiet park.

Luckily, the next day you find the local town hall. There someone tells you that you can have emergency housing in the local area. You are so happy you want to hug them (but you cannot because they are behind a thick sheet of glass).

You wait around all day and finally someone takes you to a 'bed-sit'. It is damp and dark and there's lots of noise down the corridor – it sounds as though people are drunk.

What will you do?

Stay and see how it works out ... (turn to page 5).

Leave the UK and try to start again – you cannot believe that every European country treats people like this ... (turn to page 6).

Page 8

The Support Group

Finally! You go to a local community centre for people from your country. It seems a very long time since you could talk and laugh and feel comfortable using your own language. You feel relaxed again, everybody here has a similar story to you. You even meet someone you recognise from your own home-town.

The centre is organising a Saturday school for local children and you agree to help with the music classes. This is so different from your first weeks and months in the country. You take part in the campaigns and activities of the centre more and more as the months go on.

There are no more choices to make ...

Find out what happens by turning to page 9.

Make a note of how you feel when you find out what happens.

Core Activity Sheet 4.5

Page 7

Finding Friends

You have been living more or less on your own for quite a while. One day, by accident, you pass a shop that sells books in your home language. You go in and start talking to the shopkeeper. She came to the UK quite a while ago and you both start talking about what it is like in your home country now and how things have been changing.

You have been talking for hours when the rest of her family arrives home from school and work. You feel happier than you have done for a long while. You can talk in your home language again and about things you know lots about.

When you finally go back to your flat you feel much better. Your new friends have invited you to a concert the following week – a singer from your home country is touring the UK, so there is finally something to look forward to. You will have to try to keep your \$10 cash this week to get the ticket.

What will you do?

1. Join the community group who arranged the concert to meet more people ... (turn to page 8).
2. Keep on waiting, life's not so bad at the moment ... (turn to page 9).

Page 4

Wait and wait and wait...

You have been waiting for 18 months and you haven't heard anything from the authorities for a long time. You haven't been able to get a job and you have been living on 70% of the basic Income Support payment. You have actually got used to having only \$10 a week cash and now you count every single penny in the morning to make sure you do not run out before the end of the week.

Sometimes you get depressed. There are lots of exciting things happening in your town but you cannot afford to go to any of them. You would love to get a job so you had extra money and could afford to rent a nicer home but you can't find a job. Instead you spend your winter days in the library, where the heating is free, and your summer days in the park. You feel safe but not happy –you feel as if your life is on hold ...

What will you do?

1. Eventually a decision is made on your case. To find out what happens ... (turn to page 9).
2. You get fed up waiting around and try to move elsewhere ... (turn to page 6).

Core Activity Sheet 4.6

Page 5

Bed-and-Breakfast Land

Well, you thought things would be better here. Your room is tiny and you have to cook and sleep in the same room. There is a bathroom at the end of the corridor but it is used by several families. You sometimes have to wait for ages in the morning and the hot water has often run out by the time you get your turn.

When it rains your window leaks and you have to put a bowl underneath to collect the drips. You keep telling the Local Authority that you need a better flat because the damp is making you ill. They say there are no other flats available and that there are lots more desperate people ahead of you.

You are trying to sleep but the dripping water, crying baby next door and noise from the pub across the road are all driving you crazy ...

What will you do?

1. Join a local community group ... (turn to page 8).
2. Try to get to know some nice local people ... (turn to page 7).

Page 6

Leave the UK

You have decided to leave the UK but this is not easy. You arrived without a proper passport and you will have to try and leave without one too.

You manage to hide yourself in a lorry and have to stay covered up under boxes for a whole day until it stops. When you get out you look around and do not recognise the strange language that people are speaking. Eventually, after wandering around for a while, you are picked up by the local police.

Most European countries have similar rules to the UK about refugees. You are locked up whilst your case is examined by the local authorities.

There are no more choices to make ...

Find out what happens by turning to page 9.

Make a note of how you feel when you find out what happens.