

# 6. USEFUL WEBSITES AND REFUGEE RELATED RESOURCES

Interested in finding out more about refugees? Have a look at our lists of refugee related websites, organisations, books, films and documentaries....

## USEFUL WEBSITES

### Refugee Council of Australia (RCOA)

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

RCOA is the national umbrella advocacy body working on refugee issues in Australia. All information relating to Refugee Week 2010 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 2010.



'Field of Hearts' in Canberra, World Refugee Day 2004. © Loui Seselja

### United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

[www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org) and Australia for UNHCR [www.unrefugees.org.au](http://www.unrefugees.org.au)

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. As long as these are sourced and acknowledged correctly, these images can be used in presentations or on posters and promotional materials for your event or school project. Check the website regularly as these 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. Australia for UNHCR also has ideas and suggestions for interesting events and activities you can organise in support of refugees and to raise awareness about refugee issues.

### Amnesty International Australia

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

Amnesty International Australia's website provides detailed information and research relating to human rights issues, refugees and asylum seekers in Australia.

### The Australian Red Cross

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

The International Committee of the Red Cross [www.icrc.org](http://www.icrc.org) The Australian Red Cross assists asylum seekers with health support, counselling, accommodation, material aid, education, legal referrals, and social support. The website has a FAQs section, a News Room 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 are using any of their images.

### Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)

<http://www.hreoc.gov.au/education/index.html>

HREOC has a number of educational resources on multiculturalism, racism and diversity, including: Face the Facts and Voices of Australia. Resources are available for both students and teachers.

### **Foundation House: The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture**

<http://www.foundationhouse.org.au/home/index.htm>

This website offers lots of information about the experiences of refugees and asylum seekers as well as having a fantastic schools page with great resources that can be used in the classroom.

### **National Council of Churches of Australia**

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

An education kit and many resources for schools are available for download from this site which has gathered resources for the National Council of Churches Refugee and Migrant Sunday and are also great for Refugee Week.

### **Oxfam**

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

A recent Oxfam project Refugee Realities: Your Rights in Crisis has educational materials for teachers and students and can be accessed on Learning Space at:

<http://www.oxfam.org.au/refugee/learning/index.php>

### **Rural Australians for Refugees (RAR)**

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

Rural Australians for Refugees is an informal group of citizens working for more humane Immigration policies. The RAR website provides comprehensive up to date information and news, as well as providing ways you can become involved in supporting refugees in rural and regional areas. The website also has fantastic information about books and videos that look at refugee issues.

### **Victorian Department of Education & Training**

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/esl/>

This site provides some information and further links on information about refugees.

## **KEY AGENCIES WORKING WITH REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS**

### **Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC), Melbourne**

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

For those wishing to access information about community based asylum seekers in Melbourne, the ASRC website provides a range of resources and also lists volunteer and internship positions available at the Centre. The website also has some fantastic fundraising ideas, perfect for Refugee Week. The centre also runs a catering service – useful if you're organizing an event! Click here for more information [www.catering.asrc.org.au](http://www.catering.asrc.org.au)

### **Asylum Seekers Centre (ASC), Sydney**

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

Since September 2003, the ASC has assisted over 2,700 asylum seekers. It relies on donations and the assistance of volunteers who fill a variety of positions. This site provides details on how to donate or become involved in a volunteer capacity with the Centre.

### **Hotham Mission Asylum Seeker Project (ASP), Melbourne**

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

The Hotham Mission Asylum Seeker Project provides essential care and services to asylum seekers living in Melbourne. The ASP website provides information and resources on community-based asylum seekers and provides ways for the broader community to become involved through volunteering.

### **Refugee Action Collective (RAC), Victoria**

[www.rac-vic.org](http://www.rac-vic.org)

Established in 2000, RAC is a democratic, grassroots collective, representing a broad cross section of the community. To contact the Refugee Action Collective (Victoria), email [refugeeaction@hotmail.com](mailto:refugeeaction@hotmail.com)

## REFUGEE RELATED MOVIES

For more refugee related movies, documentaries and literature visit the UK Refugee Council website: <http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk/InfoCentre/refugees-in> and the US International Rescue Committee resource list:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/resources/SOARFactsheetRefugeeFilmsandBooks.pdf>

### **Mother Fish – Khoa Do (2010)**

This movie is an inspirational story of four refugees fleeing Vietnam in 1980 which goes inside the mind of one of the survivors. The present melds with the past as a quiet factory worker relives the extraordinary journey when she and her sister took to the sea in a creaky river boat in search of a better life. This film was made as a community project.

### **Welcome – Philippe Lioret (2010)**

Welcome is a touching personal account of Simon, a swimming teacher who helps his young immigrant pupil, a 17 year old Kurdish refugee named Bilal. Though the word 'politics' is never mentioned in this tremendously powerful tale, the movie highlights the inhumanity of the French Government's immigration policies.

### **The Kite Runner – Marc Forster (2007)**

Based on the international bestseller by Khaled Hosseini, The Kite Runner is an epic set in 20th-century Afghanistan. In 1978, Amir and Hassan are young boys living in Kabul, where Hassan and his father work as servants for Amir and his father, Baba. Amir and Hassan make an excellent team in kite competitions, with Hassan having a gift for running down kites, but after one contest, he is bullied by another boy, whilst Amir watches from a distance and then runs away, not helping his friend. As the Russians and then the Taliban take over Afghanistan, Baba and Amir escape to America. But even as he begins a new life in America, Amir is haunted by his cowardice and can't turn down an opportunity to try to make things right when it is offered by his father's old friend Rahim Khan—even if it means risking his life.

### **Lucky Miles - Michael James Rowland (2007)**

A movie inspired by several true stories. In 1990 an Indonesian fishing boat abandons Iraqi and Cambodian refugees in a remote part of the Western Australia. Whilst most are quickly caught by officials, three men with nothing in common but their misfortune and determination escape arrest and begin an epic journey into the heart of Australia. A movie with a rather different approach to the story of refugees arriving illegally on our shores.

### **The Art of Flight - Davin Anders Hutchins (2005)**

The Art of Flight 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.

### **Live and Become - Radu Mihaileanu (2005)**

This story begins at a Sudanese refugee camp in 1984. An Ethiopian boy is placed by his mother with an Ethiopian Jewish woman whose child has died. This woman, who will become his adoptive mother, is about to be airlifted from the camp to Israel. His birth mother, who hopes for a better life for him tells him “go, live, and become” as he leaves her to board the plane. The film tells of his growing up in Israel as he faces isolation and loneliness and deals with the secret of not being Jewish and having left his birth mother.

### **Unveiled - Angelina Maccarone (2005)**

A stunningly beautiful portrait of an Iranian refugee struggling between survival in small-town Germany and her love for a local woman.

### **Cargo - Andi Reis (2004)**

Based upon a series of true stories, Cargo is the intense tale of four refugees escaping from Croatia to the UK in the back of a lorry in the early 1990's, at the height of the Balkan wars. But are they genuine refugees, persecuted by likes of Milosevic or are they impulsive opportunists?

**Hotel Rwanda – Terry George (2004)**

The true-life story of Paul Rusesabagina, a hotel manager who housed over a thousand Tutsi refugees during their struggle against the Hutu militia in Rwanda.

**Turtles Can Fly - Bahman Ghobadi (2004)**

Near the Iraqi-Turkish border on the eve of an American invasion, refugee children like 13-year-old Kak (Ebrahim), gauge and await their fate.

**Beyond Borders - Martin Campbell (2003)**

An epic tale of a romance between two persons sharing the same passion for the world's hot spots. Sarah Jordan (Angelina Jolie) encounters a renegade doctor, whose impassioned plea for help to support his relief efforts in war torn Africa moves her deeply. As a result, she embarks upon a journey to the far corners of the world.

**Distant Lights - Hans-Christian Schmid (2003)**

Set on the Polish/German border, this film tells the story of life on the border of two countries; the division between the prosperous west and the impoverished east. As in Spare Parts (2003), the ferrymen here are unscrupulous, charging inordinate sums for tremendous danger and no guarantees that refugees will arrive safely.

**Marking Time - ABC TV/Beyond Productions (2003)**

At the outset, the town and the country are intoxicated with the spirit of the Olympics, and the anniversary of Australia's federation. Hal gets his driver's licence, his first car, the right to drink, the right to vote, and falls in love with Randa, a young Afghan refugee. But there is a shifting of consciousness in the town and the nation about refugees, border protection and their place in the world. Hal's heart is broken when he realises that his town is one in which he no longer belongs. Marking Time is the coming of age of a boy and a nation.

**Olympics in Camp - Majid Majidi (2003)**

Some kids in a refugee camp in Afghanistan gather the bullet-shells and change the battle field into a playing field for eternal friendship in the hope of a future with no war and no violence.

**Osama - Siddiq Barmak (2003)**

Inspired by a true story, this movie centres on three generations of women, deeply affected by the advent of the Taliban's rule in their land, Afghanistan.

**Spare Parts - Damjan Kozole (2003)**

The director is a veteran punk rocker from Slovenia whose film focuses on drunk, corrupt and depressed smugglers who reminisce about their former lives as racing car drivers as they ferry terrified human cargo across the Croatian border to Italy.

**Barefoot to Heart - Majid Majidi (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 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.

**The Cage House - Angela Van Boxtel (2002)**

Award winning short movie, 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.

**Dirty Pretty Things - Stephen Frears (2002)**

An illegal Nigerian immigrant discovers a harsh side of London life.

**In This World - Michael Winterbottom (2002)**

Based on true events and using refugees themselves as the actors, this story follows two young Afghan refugees on their journey to London.

**Baran (2001)**

In a building site in present-day Tehran, Lateef, a 17-year-old Kurdish worker is irresistibly drawn to Rahmat, a young Afghan worker. The revelation of Rahmat's secret changes both their lives.

**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 these two young girls, their daily life, their dreams, hopes and aspirations and their friendship.

**Last Resort (2000)**

When Tanya steps off the plane in London, she might think she's never left Moscow. The pretty single mum can't get past immigration with her \$85, her son, and her story about meeting her British fiancée, so she comes up with a spur-of-the-moment plan: demand political asylum in order to buy time, call her fiancé, and live happily ever after. She has no idea what a big mistake this will turn out to be.

**A Time for Drunken Horses (2000)**

A movie about a group of orphan Kurdish children who live on the poverty line in a village near the Iran-Iraq border.

**Blackboards (1999), dir. Samira Makhmalbaf**

A group of male teachers cross the mountainous paths of the remote Iranian Kurdistan region. They wander from village to village in search of students, carrying large blackboards on their backs, sometimes using them as shelter, camouflage and as shields for gunfire.

**Exile in Sarajevo (1997), dir. Tahir Cambis and Alma Sahbaz**

A passionate and personal account of the siege of Sarajevo, from the viewpoint of Bosnian-Australian Tahir Cambis and Sarajevan Alma Sahbaz. Nirvan, a talented young dancer, dies after a shelling attack. Her family, unable to come to terms with their loss, is forced to leave Sarajevo as refugees bound for America. Eight year old Amira's illustrated diary is poignant testimony of the murder of family and friends. Both stories are set within the context of NATO bombing missions, UN Press Conferences and the liberation and reunification of parts of the city under Bosnian-Serb control.

**La Promesse (1997), dir. Jean-Pierre Dardenne and Luc Dardenne**

Igor and his father, Roger, are making a decent living renting apartments to illegal immigrants and sometimes working them illegally (among other scams). But when the building inspector pays a surprise visit and Amidou falls off a scaffold in his hurry to hide, things start to unravel, particularly when Igor makes a promise to the injured Amidou that ultimately exposes the different values of Igor and Roger, and of Amidou's wife, Assita.

**Mohamed Ali's Happy Day Feast (1997), dir. Nicky Tyndale-Biscoe**

Having survived war in Ethiopia, Somalia and Yemen, but suffering the loss of home and family, Mohamed and his wife Halima arrive in Australia with a renewed optimism, and set about establishing their dream cafe.

**Tale of the Three Jewels (Conte des tris diamants) (1994), dir. Michel Khleifi**

A beautiful film of young adolescent love, of dreams and fantasies, which sadly takes place in a world of conflict, hate and violence in the warravaged Gaza Strip.

**El Norte - Gregory Nava (1984)**

This film tells the story of Mayan Indigenous youths in the 1980s who are tired of being labelled "brazos fuertes" (manual labourers). In an effort to improve their life, they are discovered by the Guatemalan army. After the army destroys their village and family, they are forced to flee Guatemala due to ethnic and political persecution.

## REFUGEE RELATED DOCUMENTARIES

### **Home Across Lands - John Lavall (2009)**

Documentary that explores the journey of resettlement– it tells the story of a small group of Kunama refugees and how they re-establish their sense of community in their new home in America.

### **New Year Baby - Socheata Poeuv (2008)**

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. The great thing about this movie is the website and all its resources, including background information and discussion questions.

See <http://newyearbaby.net/downloads/IL-Discussion-Guides.pdf> for more information.

### **God Grew Tired of Us - Christopher Dillon Quinn (2006)**

Written and directed by Christopher Dillon Quinn, this documentary film is about three of the "Lost Boys of Sudan", a group of some 25,000 young men who have fled the wars in Sudan since the 1980s, and their experiences as they move to the United States.

### **Anthem: An Act of Sedition - Tahir Cambis & Helen Newman (2005)**

This award winning documentary chronicles the human rights struggles of our times. In the age of the 'War on Terror', Anthem bears dramatic, intimate witness to the last five years of history, which saw the emergence of a more militaristic and racist Australia, following America in its footsteps. An epic journey of the heart and mind, Anthem is a provocative meditation on our ideals of freedom in a country still unsure of its identity or vision for the future.

See <http://www.acmi.net.au/928B196A6E9A4ED6B3C52AEF311908FB.aspx> for more information.

### **Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars – Zach Niles & Banker White (2005)**

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.

### **In the Shadow of the Palms - Wayne Coles-Janess (2004)**

This documentary details life in Iraq before and during the most controversial war of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It provides an intimate insight into the lives of ordinary people during Saddam's Regime as they prepare for the rapidly approaching War - A multi-award winning production.

### **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.

### **Molly and Mobarak - Tom Zubrycki (2004)**

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.

### **Lost Boys of Sudan - Megan Mylan & Jon Shenk (2003)**

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. See <http://www.lostboysfilm.com/>

**Woomera – ABC Four Corners (2003)**

Woomera was a notorious mandatory detention centre in South Australia, a particularly arid and inhospitable part of the desert. In 2002, about one thousand people gathered at Woomera to protest about the Government's policy of mandatory detention for asylum seekers. This Four Corners episode tells about a particularly contentious chapter in Australian history that continues to divide opinions about this policy. For a transcript of the Four Corners episode go to:

<http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/content/2003/transcripts/s858341.htm>

**Jenin Jenin - Mohammed Bakri (2002)**

This documentary features interviews of Palestinians in a refugee camp in Jenin during April 2000. A film of despair, human tragedy, hatred, cynicism and last but not least, of hope.

**Australia's Pacific Solution - Kate Durham and Sarah McDonald (2002)**

Explores Australia's Pacific Solution and the involvement of Nauru.

**Australia's Refugee Dilemma - Christine Henderson & Neil Barrett (2002)**

This documentary investigates what is a refugee, why people become refugees, people smuggling and what happens to people who come to Australia, claiming to be refugees.

**Tampa and Beyond (2002)**

Covers Tampa incident, the establishment of off-shore detention centres, and explains relevant laws.

**A Well Founded Fear - Michael Camerini & Shari Robertson (2000)**

Tells the stories of oppression that brought political refugees to America but even more interestingly, it looks at the system that decide who gets to stay and who gets sent back, perhaps to prison or death.

**A Well Founded Fear of Persecution – ABC Four Corners (2000)**

Journalist Chris Masters looks at the previously hidden world of Australian detention centres. For a transcript of the Four Corners episode go to: <http://www.abc.net.au/4corners/stories/s110015.htm>

**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.

**The Plight of Tibet and the Dalai Lama: Interviews with Tibetan Refugees (1999)**

This film consists of interviews with Tibetan refugees (predominantly Buddhists persecuted for their religion), including the current Dalai Lama, as well as those people who operate the services in India which assist the arriving refugees. They describe both their treatment at the hands of the country's rulers as well as the general socio-economic climate brought about by the policies of the government of Tibet.

**Children of Shatila - Mai Masri (1998)**

The Shatila Camp in Beirut has become home to more than 15,000 Palestinians and Lebanese who share a common experience of displacement, unemployment and poverty. This is the story of two Palestinian children born and raised in the Shatila Camp - Farah aged 11 and Issa aged 12. It is the intent of documentary filmmaker Mai Masri to present the children's stories of the realities of life in Shatila through their own eyes and words, providing each child with a video camera.

**Eternity and a Day - Theo Angelopoulos (1998)**

A famous author, reaching the end of his life, encounters a young Albanian refugee boy who is one of the thousands of illegal immigrants from Eastern Europe coming into Greece. Alexandre begins a quest to return the boy home, and when that proves impossible, attempts to give the young orphan the security and opportunities unavailable on the streets.

### **Dreams and Silence - Omar Al Qattan (1991)**

It is the autumn of 1990 in Jordan. The Islamic movement has declared a Holy War against the West and the Gulf War is at its height. Haifa Samhuri is a middle-aged Palestinian refugee living in Jordan. Haifa talks of her life as a refugee

## **REFUGEE RELATED STORIES AND VOICES**

**ICE (Informational and Cultural Exchange centre)** has a wide range of resources – CDs, **videos**, books and other materials that have been produced collaboratively with culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

### *The Applicant and Colour Blind*

Developed in association with the Sudanese Filmmaking Group, these films were produced by ICE as a part of the 'Africa on Screen' Initiative. The Applicant documents some of the first-hand experiences of African- Australians in the local job market. Colour Blind is a visual exploration of the experiences of African refugees in Australia.

### *Darkness over Paradise*

The Association of Sierra Leonean Journalists in Exile (ASLJIE) collaborated with ICE to produce Darkness over Paradise, a documentary presenting the vivid narrative of the lives of ordinary people and media workers caught up in civil war, the brutal practice of amputation, and the enormous displacement of refugees caused by the conflict.

The full list of ICE resources and ICE contact details can be accessed at

<http://ice.org.au/newswire/2007/10/stories-voices-new-resourcesavailable/>

### **Doctors without Borders**

Refugee testimonials and stories can be found on the Doctors without Borders website at:

<http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/events/refugeecamp/about/testimonials.cfm>

### **The Refugee Claimants Support Centre Choir**

The 'Scattered People' CD is a collection of songs written and inspired by Refugee Claimants in Brisbane. The 'Scattered People' is the story of ongoing struggles and journey from country of origin to resettlement in Australia.

<http://www.brisbane-stories.webcentral.com.au/scatteredpeople/>

## **REFUGEE RELATED BOOKS FOR OLDER READERS AND ADULTS**

### **Dave Eggers – What is the What**

This is the story of Valentino Achak Deng, a refugee in war-ravaged southern Sudan who flees from his village in the mid-1980s and becomes one of the so-called Lost Boys. Valentino's travels bring him in contact with enemy soldiers, with liberation rebels, with hyenas and lions, with disease and starvation, and with deadly murahaleen (militias on horseback) the same sort who currently terrorize Darfur. Eventually Deng is resettled in the United States with almost 4000 other young Sudanese men, and a very different struggle begins.

### **Suzanne Fisher-Staples - Under the Persimmon Tree**

An outstanding novel exploring the relationship between a young American woman and a refugee girl.

### **Roseanne Hawke - Soraya the Storyteller**

This is a novel about Soraya, her mother and young brother who are refugees from Afghanistan adjusting to life in Australia under Temporary Protection Visas, after surviving the journey on a people-smuggling boat and spending time in the Woomera detention centre. The story is told through Soraya who uses storytelling to come to terms with the tragedy of her family's life in her homeland and struggle

for acceptance in Australia. It will engender empathy for refugees and provoke discussion on a range of ethical issues.

### **Alek Wek - Alek: Sudanese Refugee to International Supermodel**

Alek Wek grew up in the Sudan in the midst of the vicious civil war. Now, at age 28, she is one of the most sought-after supermodels in the world, and has single-handedly changed the traditional concept of what is beautiful in the West. As model, refugee activist and businesswoman she is an inspiration - and this remarkable real-life story sheds light on her journey from Dinka clan roots in war-torn Sudan to a new beginnings in Brooklyn. Born the seventh of nine siblings, on her escape to London at the age of fourteen she had already lived through violence, genocide and forced migration in her homeland. Alek Wek's poignant, powerful memoir gives an unforgettable insight into her rise to fame as a supermodel with a conscience, who balances cover shoots for glossy magazines (she was named Model of The Decade by i-D magazine) with political activism (working with Doctors Without Borders and the U.S. Committee for Refugees Advisory Council) and a dedication to refocus the world's attention on those she left behind in the Sudan.

## **REFUGEE RELATED BOOKS FOR CHILDREN**

*The following books were sourced from:*

- Walker Books Australia and New Zealand [www.walkerbooks.com.au](http://www.walkerbooks.com.au),
- Waverly Library: <http://www.waverley.nsw.gov.au/library/home>
- Austral Ed Book Supplies from Australia [www.australed.iinet.net.au/books\\_from\\_middle\\_east.html](http://www.australed.iinet.net.au/books_from_middle_east.html)
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [www.unhcr.org.uk/docs/Resources%20list.doc](http://www.unhcr.org.uk/docs/Resources%20list.doc)

### **June Allan - Mohammed's Journey**

This is a true story of an Iraqi-Kurdish refugee child and his flight from his home in Kirkuk to the UK. This is the story of Mohammed's escape from Iraq by bus, on horseback, in an inflatable raft on a raging river and finally, hiding in a lorry on a ship. It covers his journey from Kirkuk to the Iraq-Iran border, through Iran, into Turkey and then on to England and safety.

### **Tamar Bergman - Along the tracks**

Recounts the adventures of a young Jewish boy who is driven from his home by the German invasion, becomes a refugee in the Soviet Union, is separated from his family, and undergoes many hardships before enjoying a normal home again.

### **Caroline Castle (in conjunction with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) - For Every Child**

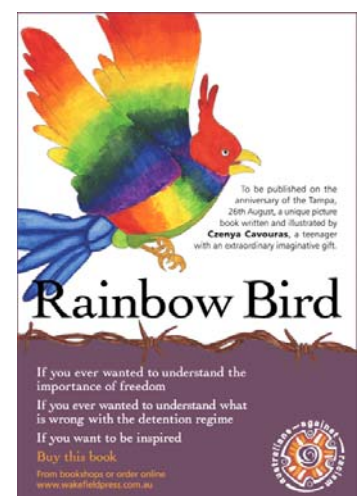
A picture book which details the 15 most important rights of the child. Each right has a specific illustration in a different style by a different artist around the world. This could lead to a discussion about why people may have to flee from their own country.

### **Kathryn Cave (in conjunction with Oxfam) - W is for World**

An alphabet book suitable for 5-9 year olds that looks at the daily life of adults and children around the world, encouraging a message about peoples basic rights for shelter, food, water, health and education.

### **Czenya Cavouras - Rainbow Bird**

Rainbow Bird is a deeply moving children's picture book written and illustrated by 14 year old Czenya Cavouras, who is now in high school. Everyone who has had anything to do with refugees and asylum seekers 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 - [RAR](#)*)



### **Nicki Cornwell - Christophe's Story**

This book tells the story of 8 year old Christophe who flees the fighting in Rwanda to come to England as a refugee with his family. It is about his difficulty settling in and also about the notion of telling stories and awareness raising.

### **Shelley Davidow - The Red Shadow**

Miri, a young refugee girl, returns home to her village after the end of the war. The story follows the rebuilding of her village and Miri's reunification with her brother and eventually her father.

### **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)

### **Deborah Ellis - Children of war: Iraqi refugees speak**

Five years have passed since the U.S. and its allies invaded Iraq, and true democracy has yet to come. Four million Iraqis have been displaced; half are living in desolate tent camps, the others mostly stuck in Jordan and Syrian. All face uncertain futures. In this book, 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, but also a few trying to build new lives in North America. Some families left Iraq with money; others are penniless, ill, or disabled. Most of the parents are working illegally or not at all, and the fear of deportation is a constant threat. The children speak for themselves, with little editorial comment, and their stories are frank, harrowing, and often reveal a surprising resilience in surviving the consequences of a war in which they played no part.

### **Victoria Francis - Letters to Grandma Grace**

An African refugee family's experiences in their country of asylum are told through letters from the children to their Grandma Grace. The letters illustrate the difficulties and hardships they face in adapting to their new home.

### **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. Written for a more mature youth, the stories evoke the sad, scary, thought-provoking, and sometimes amusing experiences of children and families who have displayed extraordinary courage and hope. This collection offers insight to bridge the gap between refugees and those permanently settled and gives youth a global perspective on the refugee experience.

### **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. See the Allen & Unwin Teaching Suggestions by Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright booklet at <http://www.allenandunwin.com/uploads/BookPdf/TeachersNotes/9781741752663.pdf>

### **John Heffernan - My Dog**

A very moving understated story in picture book format of terrible suffering as a consequence of ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia. Seen through the eyes of a young boy, the story is sensitively illustrated in water colours by Andrew McLean. It would be a moving introduction to discussion on human rights and suffering. (8 - 12 years)

### **Mary Hoffman - The Colour of Home**

A fabulous book about refugees adjusting to a new environment. Hassan feels out of place in a new cold, grey country. At school, he paints a picture showing his colourful Somalian home, covered with the harsh colours of war from which his family has fled. He tells his teacher about their voyage from Mogadishu to Mombasa, then to the refugee camp and on to England. But gradually things change.

When Hassan's parents put up his next picture on the wall, Hassan notices the maroon prayer mat, a bright green cushion and his sister Naima's pink dress: the new colours of home.

### **Clare M.G Kemp - My Brother is a Soldier**

The story of the return of a child soldier to his village in Africa and the problems he faces in trying to reintegrate and lead a normal life.

### **Lynn Kramer - Cry Baby**

The story of a young refugee girl who finds herself in a new home after fleeing from war. Zione has difficulty making new friends because the other children see her as different. However, she overcomes this by demonstrating through a heroic act that she is really no different from the other children.

### **Elizabeth Laird - Kiss the Dust**

This book tells the story of Tara and her family as they are forced to flee Iraq because of her father's involvement in the Kurdish resistance movement. Suitable for 12 – 17 year olds, the story details the plight of a family who become refugees.

### **Living in Australia Series - Sudanese Australians**

This non-fiction book uses a variety of interviews to look into the customs and traditions of the Sudanese people living in Australia.

### **David Miller - Refugees**

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. Award-winning artist David Miller tells their story with brightly coloured three-dimensional paper sculptures in this attractive picture book for young children.

### **Sibylla Martin - On the Other Side of the Hill**

Jacques finds himself in a refugee camp and has trouble making friends with the local children. However, a football match between the children from the refugee camp and the local populations brings the children together.

### **Sibylla Martin - The Lost Children**

Recounts the story of how young Ibuka becomes separated from her family when fleeing her home and comes to find herself, along with her younger brother, at a centre for lost children.

### **Angela Neustatter - Refugee: It happened to me**

The book features extended interviews with six children/young adults who are refugees or asylum seekers. They come 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. The aim is not to be sensational but sympathetic and informative. Extended endmatter provides advice, contact numbers and addresses. The text itself is in a question and answer format, recording as literally as possible the answers of the person being interviewed. Talking points and black and white photographs are also included.

### **Anthony Robinson - Gervelie's Journey**

A true story of a young refugee. In 1995, Gervelie was born in the Republic of Congo. In 1997 fighting broke out in her home city and they had to flee to safety. Her father's political connections mean they are still unable to return home. This is Gervelie's story, told using photographs from her own life. Gervelie and her father are currently living in the UK, waiting to hear if their case for asylum will be accepted.

### **Anthony Robinson - Hazmat's Journey**

This book follows the story of a boy from Chechnya. In 2001 when the Chechens were at war with Russia, he was on his way to school in the capital of Grozny when he stepped on a landmine. His leg had to be amputated and eventually he and his father came to the UK for expert treatment and fitting of an artificial leg. As it was unsafe for them to return to Chechnya, the family sought asylum in the UK. Eventually Hazmat's mother and sister joined them in London and now the family are learning to adapt

to their new life after the horror of living in a war zone. The poignant and at times harrowing story reveals the bravery Hazmat and his family in facing and overcoming their circumstances to start a new life. Simply told and atmospherically illustrated with photographs and colour illustrations, this is a powerful book that will move all who read it and also be a valuable recourse for schools.

**Jill Rutter and Mano Candappa - Why do they have to fight? Refugee children's stories from Bosnia, Kurdistan, Somalia and Sri Lanka**

Most of the testimonies used in this book were collected during a research project about refugee children. Recommended for teachers, the issues behind asylum and refugees are brought to life by these children's stories and testimonies.

**Allen Say - Grandfather's Journey**

A beautifully illustrated picture book for older students (9 and up). Allen Say's grandfather made the journey from Japan to the United States when he was a young man and this story beautifully describes through text and illustrations the love that he and his grandson feel for both countries. Many students will relate to the feelings of longing expressed.

**Shaun Tan - The Arrival**

This is an extraordinary textless picture book which tells the story of an immigrant's journey to a new land where he know no one and understand very little. Yet on his arrival to the new country, he meets friends who help him and tell stories about how they too came to the new land. Through these stories children can learn about the experiences of a variety of immigrant families.

**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.

**Benjamin Zephaniah - Refugee boy**

Alem is on holiday with his father for a few days in London. He has never been out of Ethiopia before and is very excited. They have a great few days together until one morning when Alem wakes up in the bed and breakfast they are staying at to find the unthinkable. His father has left him. It is only when the owner of the bed and breakfast hands him a letter that Alem is given an explanation. Alem's father admits that because of the political problems in Ethiopia both he and Alem's mother felt Alem would be safer in London - even though it is breaking their hearts to do this. Alem is now on his own, in the hands of the social services and the Refugee Council. He lives from letter to letter, waiting to hear from his father, and in particular about his mother, who has now gone missing...A powerful, gripping new novel from the popular Benjamin Zephaniah.

## ONLINE REFUGEE RELATED GAMES

### Long Journey Young Lives (2002)

Long Journey Young Lives is a story about being a young refugee. It's an online interactive documentary which provides an intimate and unique insight into the experiences of child refugees. From the violence and danger of their homeland, to their dangerous journey and subsequent detention in Australia, young refugees present an exclusive account of their experiences as refugees. The documentary also explores the opinions of young Australians on issues surrounding asylum seekers. Australian school children, all under the age of 12, express their views on mandatory detention, being called 'boat people' and 'queue jumpers', and talk about whether Australia has a responsibility to accept refugees.

[http://www.abc.net.au/longjourney/index\\_flash.html](http://www.abc.net.au/longjourney/index_flash.html)

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 or 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. It provides background material, exercises and discussion topics aimed at increasing students' understanding of refugee issues. To play, go to [http://www.playagainstallodds.com/game\\_us.html](http://www.playagainstallodds.com/game_us.html).

**\*\* Looking for more ways to educate yourself?  
Check out "Teachers Resources" \*\***