



Schools Kit

March 2013

Road to Refuge is an interactive and education website that allows the user to be placed in the shoes of an asylum seeker on their journey from their country of origin to Australia. The story of the fictional asylum seeker is segmented and at each cross road, the user must make a decision on behalf of the character, shaping the outcome of their journey. There is also a “Learn More” page at the end of the journey which groups further information into interest areas so that it acts as a springboard for already engaged users to delve into further education about asylum seekers.

The topic of asylum seekers and refugees (international and domestic) is something that can be integrated in many school subjects.

It lends itself to:

- English
- Social Studies
- Philosophy
- Ethics
- Religion
- History
- Psychology
- Economics
- Media
- Legal Studies
- Australian Politics

As well as:

- Debating
- Oration

How Road to Refuge can be used in the classroom:

- As a resource when studying the asylum seeker issue in depth
- OR
- As research or inspiration for a secondary activity (such as an oral) allowing students to use for research and pick a topic of their choice.

The Journey: Capturing the attention of the students

The Road to Refuge journeys are designed to capture the attention of the users so that they are taking in information and obtain perspective without feeling as though they are bogged down with reading or dry information.

A teacher can either ask the students to individually take a journey or they can ask a student to take a journey in front of the class with the use of a projector. The first way allows the students to make their own choices and discuss them later. The second way allows the students to interact by suggesting or debating which choice to make for the asylum seeker character when they reach a cross roads in the journey.

Class discussion activity:

A class discussion activity can be carried out at three points. To begin with, an initial discussion can be had before the students have had a chance to explore Road to Refuge. The teacher leading the activity should ask students to talk about what they know of asylum seekers worldwide and in Australia.

Once the initial discussion has finished, the students can begin a journey of their choice on Road to Refuge. Immediately after the students have played the program, first impressions can be aired and debate amongst students can ensue as moderated by the teacher.

The second discussion can be had once the students have been given some time to go through the "Learn More" page. The Learn More page has a number of information resources in the form of video, audio, illustrations, articles and others. The resources are grouped into information areas, some of which may be more relevant to certain subjects. The teacher can direct students to specifically direct their attention to the information group most relevant to their studies.

Continued discussion on this topic should be encouraged.

Writing activity:

In the case that the teacher in charge does not want to have a class discussion, students could be invited to write a written reflection before and after taking a Road to Refuge journey and exploring the Learn More page. This would provide an opportunity for students to compare how they felt before the journey and after finding out more.

Handout

Please visit <http://www.asrc.org.au/resources/for-teachers/> for mythbuster and fact sheet handouts about refugees and asylum seekers.

Glossary

There is a glossary available for students on the website.

Getting Road to Refuge to your school:

If you would like a speaker to come to your class or school to run through Road to Refuge or run a program specialising in asylum seeker policy and debate, please get in contact with the Road to Refuge team. Usually there is a nominal fee involved to cover the cost of travel and time spent at your school.

Contact details are at the end of this resource kit.

“Learn More” Page

How to start a conversation

This section is a guide to starting a conversation with friends and family about asylum seekers. Included are some great resources for mythbusters, facts and other information about asylum seekers and refugees. This can be used for all classes as it provides general information and discussion coaching.

This can be a great resource for **oration** and **debating**.

Getting involved

This guide sets out a number of ways in which people can get involved with asylum seekers and refugees in Australia. Although not all of these ways are viable for students, we would encourage students to submit written or multimedia work to the human rights publication Right Now (www.rightnow.org).

This may be really exciting for students who have written **English** pieces or created **Media** pieces and would like to be published.

Further, many of the organisations listed in the “Getting Involved” group (especially the ASRC) are heavily reliant on donations. If students wished to hold a fundraiser, any funds donated would be very helpful in bettering the lives of asylum seekers in Australia.

The Real Stories

This section relates to the real stories of asylum seekers in various forms. One is an illustration with some writing, one is a piece written by two young girls who came to Australia by boat. There are also videos and articles. This is useful for **English**, **media**, **ethics** and **politics** classes.

Issues for discussion

- What does it take for a person to leave their home?
- What is life like in transit countries that do not recognise an asylum seeker's right to be there?
- What is the emotional effect on asylum seekers' families who have been left behind?
- What is it like to be uncertain whether or not refugee protection will be granted by the Australian government?

The Dollars

This section relates to the cost of detention or other asylum seeker policy in Australia. This is useful for **economics** and **politics** classes, although can be used for discussions as students are often very interested when they are formulating ideas about asylum seekers.

It is important to note that these figures are highly variable and due to the number of people coming in and out of detention, it is difficult to come to exact projections. The best figures are retrospective summaries of the last budget year.

Issues for discussion

- How does the cost of community detention compare with implementing the detention network?
- How does the cost of remote location detention centres compare with metropolitan centres?
- How does the cost of off shore detention compare with on shore detention?
- If community detention was used as the primary way to process asylum seekers, where could the savings from the detention network be spent?

The Conditions of Detention

This section relates to different aspects of conditions of detention – such as psychologically, in terms of physical health and in terms of services provided. This is particularly useful for **psychology, legal studies, ethics and politics** classes.

Issues for discussion

- What impact does conditions in detention have on asylum seekers while they are in detention as well as the continued impact after they leave?
- What is the impact of prolonged detention?
- Do the conditions of detention break any international laws?
- How could conditions in detention be improved?
- What psychological impact do the conditions of detention have on asylum seekers and how can that be alleviated?
- Can psychological measures be put in place to completely alleviate the adverse psychological impact of detention?

The Law

This section relates to both domestic and international law, useful for **legal studies and politics** classes.

Issues for discussion

- Is it illegal to seek asylum by boat? If not, why?
- What is a refugee according to international law?
- Does Australia recognise the UN Refugee Convention?
- What (if any) international laws are being broken by the use of immigration detention centres in Australia?

The Politics and Policies

This section relates to the policies and politics surrounding asylum seekers. Resources questioning the basis of policies are available as well as criticisms of the current policies. This is particularly useful for **legal studies, ethics, media** and **politics** classes.

Issues for discussion

- Why do politicians believe it is necessary to use detention to process asylum seekers?
- What is deterrence?
- Why do politicians want to deter asylum seekers from coming to Australia by boat? Are there a number of reasons?
- What is each political party's position on asylum seekers?
- What drives their position?

Social Media

Every 6 or so months, there will be a new fictional character introduced so that there are always new journeys to explore. To stay in touch with this, teachers and students can interact on Facebook, Twitter or join our mailing list. All of these are available on www.roadtorefuge.com

Contact Details

If you would like to get in touch for any reason, you can do so using the social media pathways above

OR

you can email Dana Affleck at <mailto:road2refuge@gmail.com>