

# Cultural Sensitivity and Educational Resources for Educators and School Staff

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**Recent research regarding Syrian refugee integration and cultural sensitivity for the Canadian classroom.**

## Classroom Integration for Refugee Children

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### **An Outline for Including Refugees in Canadian Education Policy**

(key words: identity, integration, power imbalance)

<http://cjnse.journalhosting.ucalgary.ca/ojs2/index.php/cjnse/article/view/418/pdf>

This is a literature review of past case studies and scholastic research surrounding refugee students and their settlement among predominantly Western cultures. The article encourages educators and staff to regard each refugee child individually, as not all refugee children come from war-torn countries. Teachers and staff are encouraged to see them as valuable to the classroom, and to understand that refugee children perform well academically. The article also exposes the tendency of refugee children to be discriminated against (not only by their peers but by persons in academic authority), how teachers tend to have an imbalance of power (lording their prejudices and assumptions) and how often refugee children greatly struggle with their own identity and belonging in the classroom.

### **Language for Resilience: Supporting Syrian Refugees**

(key words: language, host communities, social cohesion, literary skills for integration)

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/education/schools/support-for-languages/thought-leadership/research-report/language-resilience>

A report funded by the UNCHR explores how the role of language can help Syrian refugees integrate positively, allowing their voices to be heard and giving them the social skills needed to live within their host communities. Language learning improves academic performances and creates a more inclusive and safe classroom for refugee students.

### **Helping Students Deal with Trauma Related to Geopolitical Violence and Islamophobia**

(key words: trauma, islamophobia, Muslim perspective, anxiety, mental health, sociological health)

<http://www.nccm.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/ED-GUIDE-ENGLISH-BOOK.pdf>

From the National Council of Canadian Muslims, this document offers an expository look at how to help Muslim students adapt, integrate and heal within the classroom of their Canadian hosts. Authored and delivered through the lens of Muslims, this report calls on educators to become implementers of change and healing through listening, understanding and patience.

### **Teacher Support for Refugee Children in Canada**

(key words: teacher support, integration, cultural practices, nonverbal communication)

<https://bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/SocialJustice/Programs/GlobalEd/Teacher%20Guide%20PDF.pdf>

A very helpful resource for educators to prepare themselves for the integration of Syrian children. This study is extremely beneficial for educators in how to interact with Syrian children and their families, from gestures to cultural taboos. This guide also includes practical applications of how to make the refugee children feel welcome and safe along with building initial relationships with their parents. In addition, the report includes basic ways to communicate with children having little to no English language knowledge.

### **Best Practices for School Settlement Workers**

(key words: newcomer, culture, integration, community, youth)

[http://atwork.settlement.org/downloads/atwork/Best\\_Practices\\_School\\_Settlement\\_Workers\\_final.pdf](http://atwork.settlement.org/downloads/atwork/Best_Practices_School_Settlement_Workers_final.pdf)

This resource sets out standards of practice to support the integration of newcomer children and families into the school system. These methods are established by Settlement Workers in Schools.

### **Newcomer Outreach and Integration through Sports**

(key words: sports, community, newcomer, integration)

[http://www.cin-ric.ca/PDFs/resources/Newcomer-OutreachIntegration\\_Sports.pdf](http://www.cin-ric.ca/PDFs/resources/Newcomer-OutreachIntegration_Sports.pdf)

A list of sports curriculum and activity ideas used in the schools of Ottawa. Newcomers are able to integrate through sports which help them connect with their school mates, learn the English language and enable physical health. Sports can be implemented at the school, during recesses or conducted through community centres.

### **Wisdom2Action: Best Practices to Support Young Refugees**

(key words: community, awareness, integration, discussion, problem solving, acculturation)

<http://cycconetwork.org/wisdom2action-events/refugees/>

The Children and Youth in Challenging Contexts Network (CYCC) has created a series of videos, event listings and resources for how to integrate Syrian youth in their communities, schools and work places. The site includes education sheets for educators on supporting refugee children and youth while supporting the development of involving community leaders (e.g. from the Mosque, community, etc.) for their acculturation. The CYCC has created community events where people from public and private sectors come together to learn, listen and understand integration from a Syrian perspective. Their model can be followed in almost any community and would help assist Syrian youth and their acculturation process.

## **Curriculum Resources for Educators**

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## **An Art Therapy Intervention for Symptoms of Post-traumatic Stress, Depression, and Anxiety among Syrian Refugee Children**

(key words: art therapy, dynamic therapy, PTSD, depression, anxiety)

<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17450128.2016.1181288>

Conducted in Turkey at a large Syrian refugee camp, children from the ages of 7-12 volunteered to participate in this study which used a variety of art therapies to treat the children: music, movement and art. Post assessment results from the study showed that these forms of art therapy greatly reduced PTSD, depression and anxiety among the participants. Art therapy can be an effective tool within the classroom to help students express their own thoughts and cope with trauma.

## **In Search of Safety: Teaching about Europe's Refugee Crisis**

(key words: integration, cultural awareness, education)

<http://www.unicef.org.uk/rights-respecting-schools/resources/rrsa-teaching-resources/refugee-crisis-europe/>

UNICEF has collated and provided a free, downloadable education pack for both students (age 7 and up) and teachers to help understand the potential discussions surrounding the Syrian crisis. The education pack enables an understanding of how to be culturally sensitive and integrative for Syrian refugee children within school, in and among the classroom.

## **Teaching Refugees with Limited Formal Schooling**

(key words: development, attachment practices, language, literacy)

<http://teachingrefugees.com/young-learners/toolkit/links-resources/>

This Canadian website offers educators resources on how to educate younger learners with little to no English language proficiency or formal schooling practices. The site also includes materials for how to interact and build relationships with parents who have strong attachments to their young children.

## **Resource Guide for Supporting Children with Refugee Experience. A Surrey Welcoming Communities Project**

(key words: trauma, integration, classroom, art therapy, music, play)

[https://www.surrey.ca/files/Resource\\_Guide\\_-\\_Supporting\\_Children\\_with\\_Refugee\\_Experience.pdf](https://www.surrey.ca/files/Resource_Guide_-_Supporting_Children_with_Refugee_Experience.pdf)

The Surrey Welcoming Communities Project offers an exhaustive list of myths surrounding refugees and breaks those myths by offering historical data and current assessment of the Syrian crisis. Towards the end of the document are a list of in-depth resources for educators to help children cope with trauma through art, music and play.

## **UNICEF Action for Children Today**

(key words: teacher, curriculum, integration, classroom)

<http://www.teachunicef.org/unicef-act/children-move>

UNICEF's website offers a large variety of resources for teachers in educating their classroom on the Syrian crisis. In addition, the site provides downloadable magazines suited for younger learners which educate them on other children around the world in hostile situations.

## Advanced Learning Resource for Adult Learners

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### **Ministry of Advanced Education**

(key words: adult, advanced learning, ESL)

<http://www.aved.gov.bc.ca/abe/welcome.htm>

Ministry of Advanced Education of BC has created a section on their site for adults who wish to advance their adult education. This would be a great resource to pass along to parents of children who are ready for a furthered education.

## Cultural Awareness and Competence Resources

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### **Care for Newcomer Children**

(key words: parenting, newcomer, Syrian refugee children)

<http://cmascanada.ca/2015/12/12/caring-for-syrian-refugee-children-a-program-guide-for-welcoming-young-children-and-their-families/>

The Care for Newcomer Children Canada guide provides a historical examination on the Syrian conflict and the current status of Syrian family integration within Canada. This report exposes cultural norms and offers a variety of resources to connect with Syrian parents and their children.

### **Vancouver Immigrant Youth Blog**

(key words: story, youth, Syrian, refugee, immigrant)

<http://vanimmigrantyouth.blogspot.ca/>

This site offers many stories from immigrant and refugee youths that have integrated in Vancouver, BC. Stories about their integration, fears, experiences, and successes are great tools for helping educators understand the struggle of immigrant and refugee students.

### **Global Affairs Canada – Syria: An Overview**

(key words: culture, Syria, history, cultural practices)

[https://www.international.gc.ca/cil-cai/country\\_insights-apercus\\_pays/overview-apercu\\_sy.aspx?lang=eng](https://www.international.gc.ca/cil-cai/country_insights-apercus_pays/overview-apercu_sy.aspx?lang=eng)

Global Affairs Canada offers an overview of Syrian culture, history, religions, family dynamics and much more surrounding the people from Syria.

### **Cultural Orientation Resource Center – Refugees from Syria**

(key words: history, beliefs, customs, economy)

<http://www.culturalorientation.net/learning/backgrounders>

This site offers another cultural overview of Syrian Refugees, their cultural norms, belief systems, family practices and perceptions of the world around them. This is a very helpful resource for cultural sensitivity awareness.

### **Population Profile: Syrian Refugees**

(key words: Syrian communities, asylum, refugee, Canada)

<http://www.cpa.ca/docs/File/Cultural/EN%20Syrian%20Population%20Profile.pdf>

Compiled by the Government of Canada's Citizenship and Immigration Department, this report includes the demographics of refugees coming to Canada, the Syrian communities that have been established all over Canada, the ethnic groups of refugees and much more helpful information to provide a comprehensive understanding of Syrian newcomers.

### **War Child Canada**

(key words: war, conflict, refugees, gender, education)

<http://warchild.ca/>

A Canadian NGO specifically working for and with children from war-torn countries (i.e. Syria, Sudan, etc.). Good stories and insight to the ongoing crisis for children and the lack of educational resources.