

TEACHER'S CORNER: REFUGEE INTERNET RESOURCES

by Janet Soller



Internet resources abound for any subject and the topic of "refugee" is no different. Google will give you over a million sites in less than .19 seconds. This column will focus on three websites selected for their special features of (1) comprehension www.unhcr.ch/ (2) library resources www.interaction.org, and (3) compassionate action www.doctorswithoutborders.org. The combination of all three provide an excellent foundation for your specific purposes in your classroom community.

Comprehension

For a helpful, over-all view of the topic, start with UNHCR, The United Nations High Commission for Refugees, and the UN Refugee Agency. The home page's well-organized, left-hand column includes everything from "Basic Facts" to "Research/Evaluation" and "Statistics." The quick find drop down window is a treasure trove of keywords including children, maps, women, internships, careers, and teaching tools.

UNCHR at www.unhcu.ca/ provides teaching tools for elementary, middle, and high school teachers by associating art, history, human rights, geography, civic education, language, and literature with the topic of "refugees." The plans are divided into three age groups and include detailed purpose, background material, and student activities. The units are particularly strong because they facilitate interdisciplinary connections to the social and behavioral sciences.

Complete with photos and personal stories, UNHCR has two exciting brochures, *Refugee Teenagers* and *Children of Exile*. Also check out the "Statistics" and "Careers" pages. The statistics page provides an opportunity for mathematics to come alive and will help your students discern the importance of a strong mathematical background. The career page offers actual job openings, such as at the Senior Media Office, Islamabad, Pakistan, complete with job descriptions.

Library Resources

For a great on-line, current library resource, try "InterAction" at www.interaction.org and click "Search our Library." After a visit to this site, a teacher can develop diverse research activities that will spark individual students or develop group projects on the same subject across different countries. The library holdings include documents, press releases, and up-to-date "Monday Developments." Searches can be by geographical regions or countries. Some subjects included in the extensive program areas are food production, adoption, educational development, rural development, and sustainable development.

Compassionate Action

For the passionate, human connection about refugees, look at "Doctors without Borders," at www.doctorswithoutborders.org. Doctors without Borders is a small group of French doctors who believe that all peoples have rights to basic human health care. This site has an excellent section on fieldwork. The "International Activity Reports" are organized by country. A student can read about needle exchange and first-aid programs in Barcelona; changes in Spanish immigration law; or, in addition to malnutrition, there is an unprecedented malaria outbreak striking over three million Burundi people.

Doctors without Borders has extensive descriptions for the types of fieldwork volunteers they need. Besides physical and mental health care professionals, they also need senior project coordinators with advanced studies in areas such as anthropology to manage their complex field projects.

Reading about a humanitarian organization with real-life applications in the behavioral and social sciences may prove inspiring to students. Used together or separately, these web sites offer teachers and students the basics of refugee study and exciting learning experiences for all.

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