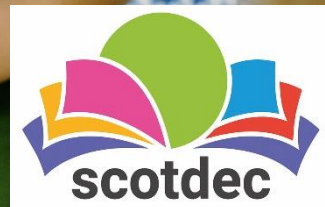


**Scottish
Book Trust**
inspiring readers and writers



Taking a rights-based approach to fiction in primary schools: all levels

A guide to using picture books to teach about, through and for children's rights and UNCRC. This resource contains all early, first and second level activities.

**CFE Early, First and Second Level
Resource created by Scottish Book Trust and Scotdec**

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About this resource

This resource aims to support teachers of early, first and second levels to explore children's rights through fiction in the classroom. The first section of the resource explores questions and discussion points which could be used and adapted in relation to *any* primary text. The resource then examines six picture books in detail, with suggested activities and questions for each. The aim is to provide teachers with confidence, motivation and understanding of how to take a rights-based approach when reading fiction with children.

Taking a rights-based approach

Taking a rights-based approach means that the articles of the convention in the UNCRC underpin the ethos and life of the classroom. For a simplified child-friendly version of the UNCRC to use with children, [visit the UNICEF website](#). This approach involves teaching about, through and for rights which are explained in more depth in this resource.

Texts as mirrors, windows and doors

The metaphor of texts as mirrors, windows and doors is often used when exploring children's literature. As a mirror, texts and images can give opportunities for children to see their own realities, cultures and identities. As windows, literature can enable children to view someone else's world, exploring ideas and cultures that are new and realising that multiple perspectives exist. As a door, texts help children to develop as critical thinkers who can respond actively, making links between the texts and taking social action.

About rights

Learning about the different rights in the UNCRC includes looking at characters' needs and wants, relating their needs to the rights in the articles of the UNCRC and asking pupils to reflect on the rights in their own life. Example questions include:

- What is the difference between what a character wants and needs?
- Which rights are, or are not, being upheld in the story?
- How are these rights upheld in your life? Are there individuals or groups who do not have these rights? Why not?

Through rights

For children to understand their rights, they also need to experience a rights-based approach in the classroom, where teachers:

- Demonstrate a commitment to human rights through relationships based on equality and mutual respect
- Put dignity at the heart of classroom principles and promoting and demonstrating cooperation, kindness, empathy and trust
- Use creative and active learning to encourage all children to engage in learning opportunities
- Equally recognise all children's achievements
- Ensure children are supported to understand the consequences of their behaviour through nurturing relationships with each other and adults

- Recognise that behaviour is a form of communication
- Create a democratic culture where all children have a voice and believe adults will take them seriously
- Enable all children to directly influence their learning
- Teach children their rights in relation to their own daily lived experiences

For rights

This focuses on equipping children to advocate and take action for their own, and others' rights. Texts offer chances for children to learn about systems of support, how their choices matter, the impact of their voice and participation and practical ways to take action. Example questions include:

- Can you engage in action or campaigns relating to the text?
- What can you do when you want to raise an issue? Who can you go to? Are there groups or people who will listen? Are there ways to improve the system?
- What choices does the character have/make in the text? What choices do you have? When should you be able to make your own choices?

With all the texts mentioned in this resource, we highly recommend that you **read the book before using it with your class** and use your best judgement about whether that specific text, or topic, is appropriate for the children in your class. There may be children in the class with a range of backgrounds and lived experiences: children should only talk about or share these if they wish to. Teachers may wish to send a copy of the book home to share with parents in advance or to talk about it with the child before reading it with the class.

Early level learning activities

Me and My Fear, Francesca Sanna (Article 31)

'Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.' – Article 31: The right to leisure, play and culture.

This book follows a young girl who is followed by a secret friend called Fear. Fear has always kept her safe, but they also hold her back from making friends or exploring.

Teaching about rights

Discuss the following:

- When the little girl starts to make friends with the boy, they draw, paint and play outside. What do you do to make friends?
- What do you like to do to relax and play?

Put two signs at either end of the classroom – one with the word “want” and the other “need”. Tell children they’re going to think about what they *want* to have and what they really *need*. What is the difference?

Either show pictures of, or write on a piece of A4, and ask the children to stand beside “want” or “need”:

- TV
- Shoes
- Clean water
- A bed
- A pet
- Time to play and relax
- A name
- An adult to take care of them
- Sweets
- School
- Medicine

Leave the picture, or piece of paper, with the most popular vote so you can reflect on

them afterwards. Go through them together, and explain that things we need are our rights. These are things that all children should have to be happy and healthy – including being able to play and relax. Having a right to something means the adults who look after us and the government of our country should make sure that we have access to it.

Teaching through rights

HWB 0-02a, HWB 0-04a

At the beginning of the book, the girl tells us that Fear kept her safe and helped her explore new things before she moved. Talk about the following as a class or in groups:

- When and where do we sometimes feel afraid?
- When might feeling afraid help to keep us safe?
- What rules and strategies do we have to stop us being afraid and help keep us safe? (e.g. road safety)
- What happens to the girl in the story when Fear grows too big?

Look at how Fear appears in the book – similar to an imaginary friend. Take a piece of paper and draw what your Fear might look like. Cut out your image and stick it onto a head and shoulders photograph of yourself so that it's sitting on your shoulder. Ask your pupils to create their own, asking them to think about what fear looks like to them.

Use these to create a class display, and revisit them throughout the year and think about how your fears might change, or you may overcome a fear.

Teaching for rights

HWB 0-01a

We've all experienced being new to a situation, whether it was joining school, a new club or group, or moving to a new town or country. Discuss:

- How did you feel when you were new to a place or situation?

- Are there any similar feelings to the girl in the book?

Imagine a new child arrives in your class from another country. Draw a large outline of a schoolbag on the board for all the pupils to see. Ask them for ideas of what they would give or say to that person to welcome them and help them not feel afraid. Write/draw their suggestions, or ask them to come and write/draw it for you.

My Name is Not Refugee, Kate Milner (Article 22)

'Refugee children have the right to special protection and help.' – Article 22: The right to special protection and assistance to enjoy all the UNCRC rights from governments, if they are a child seeking refuge or have refugee status.

My Name is Not Refugee is a moving story about a young boy and his mother who have to leave their home as it's no longer safe. The picture book invites the reader to follow their journey. When the boy has found a new home he is reminded that being a refugee does not define him.

Teaching about rights

Ask the children what they understand by the word "refugee". Where have they seen or heard this word before? Watch [the YouTube video "What is a refugee?" from Save the Children](#) (3 minutes, 43 seconds). Afterwards discuss:

- Is there anything that surprised them?
- What have they learned that they didn't know before?
- Children who are refugees have the same rights as the children who live in the new country they have moved to. Which rights were shown in the clip?

Now read *My Name is Not Refugee* together, looking at the illustrations as well as the text. Which rights can you see?

Teaching through rights

LIT 0-09a

Read the story to the children without discussing the questions provided throughout the text. Now read it a second time, exploring the questions and allowing them time to share their ideas. You could do this as a class or in groups or pairs.

Throughout the text, different words are used to describe the character's experience as he travels to a new country. Find these in the story (sad, exciting, boring, interesting, strange, new, safe). Discuss:

- When have you had experiences you would describe as sad, exciting, boring, interesting, strange, new and safe?
- Which words would you choose to describe the different experiences of the character?
- Look at the character's face in different situations. Can you describe how he is feeling by looking at his expressions?
- What would you want to say to him to reassure and welcome him?
- How do his expressions make you feel?

Near the beginning of the book, the child is told that he can pack his own bag but to only bring what he can carry. Ask children to point out the things they can see that he has chosen to bring (special soft toy, photographs, a toothbrush).

Ask them if the mother has packed anything? Encourage them to look out for these objects throughout the book. When they reach their safe place, ask them if they can notice any of these things. Ask what things might remind them of their old home?

Create a suitcase using construction paper or card which can be folded and unfolded to reveal the contents inside. Ask children to bring a photo from home of an item(s) they would pack in their suitcase, or they could draw a picture of the object(s).

Children can share the stories of their chosen items with the class. Questions that might facilitate sharing these stories include:

- What is the object used for?
- Who would use the object?
- Why is it important to you?

Bear in mind, some children in your class may have an experience of leaving important items behind.

Teaching for rights

Show children the front cover of the book. Discuss:

- Why has the book been given this title?
- What does it mean?
- Is it surprising/confusing/clever?
- Can you think of another title you would give the book?

Now read the last page of the story. Explain that the word refugee describes the character's status, in the same way as you may be described as an adult. His actual name is part of his identity as a person and the word refugee is not part of his name. Ask children why this is such an important title for the book and what we have learnt by talking about it.

Tell children that there are refugees in countries all over the world, and while the word refugee tells us that they have made a difficult journey to leave a home country, we must remember that they will have their own story to tell, and that they have the right to all of the same rights that we have, including that of a name and an identity.

First level learning activities

The Wall in the Middle of the Book, John Agee (Article 2)

'This Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, sex, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.' – Article 2: Non-discrimination

A wall runs down the middle of this book, supposedly protecting a knight from dangers on the other side of the wall: angry animals and evil ogres. However, water rises dangerously and a perilous crocodile looms on the knight's side of the wall, and he finds himself in need of help. Who will come to his rescue? This picture book highlights the dangers in holding preconceived ideas and ways in which these can be wrong and harmful.

This book looks at stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination. For clarity here's the difference between the three terms:

Term	Description
Stereotypes	An oversimplified idea or opinion about a person, group or thing
Prejudice	Judging someone unfavourably and incorrectly without knowing them on the basis of their appearance or if they belong to a particular group or community
Discrimination	Treating an individual or group unfairly as the result of a prejudicial attitude

Teaching about rights

Create an artificial division using a display board or curtain. If using cardboard, children can paint, print or draw on bricks to create a wall. Ask for four volunteers and tell them to form a group on one side of the wall. Give each a piece of paper with one of the following written on: a grandmother, a footballer, a nurse and a farmer. Ask the remaining children to sit on the other side of the wall and give them four pieces of scrap paper and a pencil, working as individuals or in pairs. Explain that on the other side of the wall, one of their peers will read out a person that they are pretending to be. The individuals or pairs should draw a quick sketch of what they think the person might look and behave like, and/or write words that they would associate with that person.

Once the activity is complete, lay the four pieces of paper with the different people written on in different areas of the room and ask children to put their drawings and

words next to the correct person. Visit each person as a class and discuss the images and words:

- Were there commonalities?
- Were all of the footballers and farmers men?
- Were the nurses women?

Explain that when we have fixed, simplified ideas about what a person looks, acts, behaves and feels like, this is called a **stereotype**. Show images of female footballers and farmers, a male nurse or a grandmother from another country.

Sometimes, parts of stereotypes can apply to someone. For example, a stereotype of Scottish people could be wearing kilts and eating haggis – sometimes this is true, but not all the time, and it doesn't give a complete picture about a person or group and doesn't apply to every Scottish person. Sometimes, stereotypes can be harmful and hurtful.

Discuss:

- What does the knight in the story expect the ogre to be like?
- In what way does the ogre break down this stereotype? Can children think of other picture books where the character breaks down a stereotype?
- Where do we get stereotypes from?
- Stereotypes can lead to prejudice. Prejudice is when we have bad thoughts about others based on stereotypes. What sorts of things do people sometimes form prejudiced ideas about?
- Why can stereotypes be hurtful and harmful?

Teaching through rights

ENG 1-19a, EXA 1-13a

After reading the story, discuss:

- Why do people build walls?
- Have you ever built a wall? Why?
- Can you name some famous walls? (Great Wall of China, The Berlin Wall, Hadrian's Wall). What was the purpose of them? (To keep people out/separate people)
- From what does the character in the book think the wall protects him? Is his side safe?
- Why do you think there is a mouse on the ogre's side? What does this tell us about the ogre?

Jon Agee has designed this book so that it is both about a wall and shows a wall running down the centre of each double page. Discuss:

- The wall symbolises other things, too. What could it stand for?
- There are very few words in the book. Why do you think this might be?
- The ogre says very little in the book. Why do you think the author has chosen to do this?
- Look at the illustrations of the ogre's expressions and body language throughout the text. How do they show the reader what he might be feeling and thinking?

Create thought bubbles which could go beside the ogre on different pages, giving his perspective on the knight and showing his feelings. Write these thought bubbles onto the board for the class to see.

Divide the class into groups of six and allocate each a character from the story. Explain that they are going to act out the story, but from the point of view of the ogre's side of the wall. Using the ideas shared on the board, encourage groups to act out the story from the other perspective. Encourage them to think about what the duck, mouse, gorilla and rhino might also think and say. Ask willing groups to show

their dramatizations to the class.

Ask children what they have learnt about the importance of seeing issues from other people's point of view.

Teaching for rights

Often, as in this story, fears and prejudices are based on lack of understanding. As a class, create a display, entitled, *If You Don't Know, Don't Be Afraid to Find Out!* It could contain a 'Dos' and 'Don'ts' list. For example:

- **Do:** ask questions, research, talk to others, learn, question ideas (etc.)
- **Don't:** be afraid of the unknown, be scared of new, use stereotypes to decide, believe everything you hear and read (etc.)

This could be displayed to teach and encourage others to stop and think, too.

Saturday at the Food Pantry, Dianne O'Neill and Brizida Margo (Article 24 and 27)

'Every child has the right to nutritious food.' – Article 24: The right to good health

'Every child has the right to have their physical needs met and Governments must help families who cannot afford to provide this.' – Article 27: The right to a life that meets their physical, social and mental needs

"Everybody needs help sometimes". This important reminder is woven throughout this picture book about a young girl and her mum making their first visit to the local food bank. An affirming message to those children who see themselves reflected in the text and a simple non-judgemental introduction to the process of using food banks for those for whom the book will act as a window.

Read *Saturday at the Food Pantry*. After reading, ask children if they noticed something that Molly really wanted at the Food Pantry (the sugar cookies). Ask

children if they think Molly *needs* this food to keep her body healthy. Explain that our bodies need nutritious food, although we also might want biscuits our bodies don't need them.

Use the [Eatwell plate](#) to show children what foods we need to stay healthy. Explain that the food on the plate is nutritious and we need a mixture of all these foods to stay healthy. Make sure children understand that it is okay to eat crisps, biscuits etc. just less often and not as much of these.

Bring out a shopping bag full of different kinds of food. Ask children to sort it into 'needs' (nutritious food our bodies need) and 'wants' (food we don't need but like to enjoy now and then).

Explain to the children that the things we need are our rights. All children have the right to nutritious food and to learn about what foods we need to stay healthy. Explain that all children have the right to have their physical needs met and this means food to help their bodies to grow. Explain that the government must help families who do not have enough money to provide this.

Explain that Molly's family weren't able to buy food, and that they needed some help with this. Discuss:

- Did Molly's family get help?
- Who provided the food?
- Is the government doing anything to help Molly get nutritious food?
- Are the children in our school getting nutritious food?
- Who provides this?

It's important the children understand that governments do **not** provide foodbanks, and the food is donated by people and run by trusts or charities. Children may not realise that all children in P1-5 are entitled to free school meals which are provided by the government.

Teaching through rights

In this story, the different characters feel differently about using the food pantry. As a class, discuss:

- How do Molly, Caitlin and Molly's mum feel about using the pantry?
- Do their attitudes change throughout the story?
- When have you ever needed help?
- What kind of help did you need?
- How did you feel about asking for or receiving help?
- How did you feel after you had been given help?

Explain that both adults and children need help sometimes.

Teaching for rights

HWB 1-03a

In the book, Molly and her mum know that they can go to the food pantry so that they have their right to nutritious food respected. It's important that we all know where to go and whom to ask for help, and not to be embarrassed.

Ask learners what they can do at school, both indoors and outdoors, when they need help. Create a list of things that children can do to help themselves, to help each other or ask. Put the ideas into a table, for example:

I can help myself by...	I can help others by ...	An adult I can ask for help when...
Trying again	Showing them or explaining in a new way	I'm hurt
Taking deep breaths and staying calm	Working together to do something	I don't feel well
Taking a break and doing something else for a while	Telling them not to worry	I'm lost

Another way of teaching for the right to good health can be to take part in [UNICEF's OutRight Campaign 2022/23: Speak out on Children's Right to Health](#). This campaign is created by young people for young people. Any school, youth organisation, home-schooler or youth club can take part.

Second level learning activities

The Day the War Came, Nicola Davies and Rebecca Cobb (Article 22 and 28)

'Refugee children have the right to special protection and help.' – Article 22: The right to special protection and assistance to enjoy all the UNCRC rights from governments, if they are a child seeking refuge or have refugee status.

'Children have the right to an education.' – Article 28: The right to an education no matter who they are, regardless of race, gender or disability, if they're in detention or a refugee.

This picture book follows a little girl whose life is upended by war. When her school is bombed, she's forced to flee to a new country, but is rejected from joining a new school because the teacher says there is no chair for her to sit in.

Teaching about rights

Ask the children about what they know about refugees. Watch [the "Who is a refugee?" video on YouTube from UNCHR Teaching About Refugees](#) (3 minutes, 7 seconds). Discuss:

- What makes someone a refugee?
- Can accompanied children be refugees?
- Do refugees bring all their belongings to a new country?
- Can refugees go home?
- How do refugees get to a new country?

Explain that refugee children, whether alone or with parents/carers, have the right to special protection and help, and have the right to extra support to make sure all of their other rights are fulfilled.

Read the story *The Day War Came*. While reading, draw children's attention to the images which give additional information to what is going on that isn't written in the written text e.g. the military helicopters approaching in the sky. After reading, ask the pupils:

- At no point in the text does it say that the child is a refugee. How do we know she is one?
- How did she become an unaccompanied child refugee?
- What belongings did she bring to the new country?
- Is she able to go home? Why?
- How did she get to the new country?

Teaching through rights

SOC 2-16b

Read through the story and then focus on the pages that show the main character in the U.K. (when she is walking around and her visit to the school). Ask children to talk about the ways she is treated unfairly by different people.

Explain that when people treat others in a negative way because they are perceived as being different due to their racial affinity, age, ability or *refugee status* then this is called discrimination. Ask learners what they know about this. Watch [the BBC Bitesize video on discrimination](#) (2 minutes, 17 seconds).

Throughout the story, the girl says that war is everywhere: in her heart, in the way people closed doors to her, in the way people looked away and didn't smile, in the way she was turned away from school. These are all examples of ways that the girl was discriminated against because of her refugee status. Ask learners:

- What effect did the discrimination have on the girl?
- What is it that the girl feels, at the end of the story, will help to start driving war out of her heart?
- What does the chair represent?

Relate learning about discrimination from the story to other types of discrimination that exist. Make a list of other types on the board. Ask learners what the consequences of all types of discrimination may be.

Teaching for rights

Explain to children that only 63% of primary school-aged refugees are in education. To improve this, it requires work by lots of different organisations and groups including the public, government and schools. One of the ways the [UN Refugee Agency](#) say schools can help is by ensuring refugee children feel welcome. Invite children to consider ways they might do this. This could include things that cost nothing e.g. welcoming smiles instead of stares (like in *The Day War Came*) or creating classroom/school welcome signs.

An organisation which supports refugees arriving in Scotland is called [Refuweegee](#). They provide welcome packs to refugees which include a letter written by a Scot to welcome the refugee to our country. Children can write letters or postcards of welcome to children who are refugees arriving in Scotland. [Find out how to write a letter and send them on the Refuweegee website.](#)

The Name Jar, Yangsook Choi (Article 8 and 30)

‘Every child has the right to an identity. Governments must respect and protect that right, and prevent the child’s name, nationality or family relationships from being changed unlawfully.’ – Article 8: Protection and Preservation of Identity

‘Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family, whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country

where they live.' – Article 30: Children from Minority or Indigenous Groups

When Unhei, a young Korean girl, moves to America, she is anxious about introducing herself on the first day at her new school. She tells the class that she will choose a new name by the following week. Intrigued, her classmates fill a jar with names she could choose from. On the day of her name-choosing, the jar mysteriously disappears and, encouraged by her friends, Unhei keeps her Korean name and helps everyone learn what it means and how to pronounce it.

After reading the text, ask children if anyone has had experience of someone not being able to pronounce their name. Ask:

- How did they feel?
- Did they do or say anything?
- Did anyone try to change or shorten their name to make it easier to say?

Ask children what they understand by the term “identity”. Why is identity important? Explain that identity gives us a sense of belonging, and to feeling included, accepted and secure in the everyday environments in which we spend time. Our names are an important part of our personal identity.

Ask children what other things form our personal identity. These are things that we would attribute to ourselves and may not be visible to others (beliefs, values, individual characteristics, abilities, interests, personality etc.). All of these go together to contribute to our personal identity.

We can also have a social identity. This is to do with the groups we are part of and the way we act and behave in different social situations (these may include religion, racial affinity group, gender, age, immigration status). Article 30 tells us that if we move country or continent, our personal and social identities should be upheld.

Find examples in the text of Unhei and her family maintaining their Korean identity when they move to America. There may be children in the class who have moved

city or country and who are willing to talk about their experiences of relocating. Have they managed to find ways to continue with their customs, religion, food or language in their new home country, as outlined in Article 30?

Ask students to draw the outline of a suitcase or backpack, filling a piece of paper. Explain that inside, they should write in one colour aspects of their personal identity. In another colour, they should write aspects of their social identity. Ask the class why they have written about their identity inside a suitcase. Explain that the UNCRC states that our right to our identity can never be taken away, regardless of where we are in the world.

Teaching through rights

EXA 2-05a

In this text, the importance of our name as part of our identity is explored. The children are intrigued that Unhei's name has meaning and they discover that many of their names have meaning, too. Children should write their own full name in bubble writing, spacing letters and filling a page. Inside the letters, they should write words and phrases to demonstrate what they know about their name as an integral part of their identity. This might include:

- Who gave you your name
- What your name means
- If anyone else in your family has that name
- If there is any interesting historical background to your name
- If you have any nicknames
- What is your preferred name

This could be a research or homework task for children. Once the bubble letters are full of information about the significance, meaning and background to their name, ask learners what they have learnt from this. It may be that names carry much more importance than they had previously considered, or that our names are special and

carry different meanings for all of us. This helps us to think about the character Unhei in the text and why she chose not to change her name in the end.

Teaching for rights

HWB 2-09a

The UNCRC states that the right to an identity means that children have the right:

- To a name, a nationality and a birth certificate
- To have their birth and name registered as soon as possible
- To have their birth recognized by government

There are, however, millions of children around the world whose births and names are not recognised by their government and this can have very serious consequences. What might these be?

Ask children when they will be required in the U.K. to provide a certificate to show their identity. Examples include to get a passport, to register for school, to register with a doctor, to get married, to own or rent a house, to receive support from the government or to get a driving license, amongst others.

Explain that one of the most devastating violations of human rights is taking place just now in Myanmar. Find this country on a world map and explain that almost a million people have been forced to leave Myanmar and many now live in a refugee camp called Cox's Bazar, in Bangladesh. Locate Bangladesh on the map. Explain that the Rohingya people are a Muslim ethnic minority group and one of the most persecuted in the world. Their own government in Myanmar does not recognise their identity and without recognition as citizens or permanent residents of the country, the Rohingya have limited access to education, jobs, and health services, resulting in poverty and exclusion from society.

Case Study: Tosmin's Story

Together, read the case study of Tosmin (adapted from [“Tosmin’s story” on the UNICEF website](#)):

The last time Tosmin saw her father, she was 16 years old. Soldiers from the Myanmar army were making their way through the Rakhine State, and when they arrived in Buthidaung, Tosmin’s village, everything was torn apart. Tosmin lost everything, including her father. Tosmin watched her home, village and everything she once knew burn. Shouldering the loss, she began walking: it took nine days for her, her brothers and group of relatives to arrive in Bangladesh. They walked by foot, with no food, for the trip’s entirety. Eventually they would make their way to the world’s biggest refugee camp, a crowded sprawling settlement that is now home to over 910,000 Rohingya refugees like Tosmin.

Though the Rohingya community can trace their roots in Myanmar back centuries, in that country, they are considered illegal immigrants in their own country. The Rohingya have no access to citizenship or a legal identity, although they – and their families – were born in Myanmar.

In Tosmin’s hometown, Buthidaung, Rohingya are barred from even the most basic human rights. Couples are only allowed to have two children, must bribe government officials to let them marry, and need official approval to move to a new home or village. Though Tosmin loved her village and her life at home, being part of the Rohingya community was always difficult. Her teachers often ignored Muslim students like Tosmin and placed barriers between Rohingya children and educational success.

Two years after her father’s death, Tosmin still lives in Bangladesh. She and her brothers have tried to rebuild their lives in Cox’s Bazaar, but living among hundreds of thousands of the world’s most vulnerable people has not been easy. Though Tosmin hopes to claim her status as a Myanmar citizen, such an ambition is currently impossible for Rohingya refugees. Half a million Rohingya children, including Tosmin, are now counted as “stateless refugees” in Cox’s Bazaar. They have lacked a legal identity well before

becoming refugees, and with no birth certificate or formal citizenship, they hold no legal claim to the country of their birth.

“We do not have rights here or in Myanmar,” Tosmin said. “We are just in the middle of these two countries. None of us have a personal identity – and we are not recognised as individual human beings.”

This situation goes against Article 8 of The Convention on the Rights of the Child, a worldwide treaty signed by almost every country in the world – including Myanmar – in 1989. Thirty years later, we are seeing the effects of this opposition in Bangladeshi refugee camps, where children are stranded, stateless, with nowhere to go. The Convention on the Rights of the Child states that if a child is deprived of an identity, state parties need to immediately intervene in providing assistance, protection and establishment of an identity. But in Myanmar and throughout the world, governments are blatantly doing the opposite. As a result, children like Tosmin are paying the price for a conflict beyond the bounds of anything they can control.

“I don’t want to be a refugee anymore,” Tosmin said. “I want my home back.”

Discuss the case study and identify examples of the impact that the lack of a legally-recognised identity has on Tosmin’s personal sense of identity and on her ability to thrive and survive. Work together as a class to create [an issue tree](#) which explores the root causes, effects and possible solutions to the issue of Tosmin’s right to an identity not being respected. Ideas may include:

- Causes – discrimination, persecution, rights not respected by government, no official identity
- Effects – basic human rights not being respected, lack of education, lack of access to health services, isolation, lack of job opportunities, marginalisation, inequality, poor life chances
- Solutions – campaigning, awareness-raising, organisations helping to respect basic human rights to food, shelter, healthcare

Other texts

Early level

- *We All Play*, Julie Flett (Article 31)
- *Susan Laughs*, Jeanne Willis (Article 23)
- *Talking is Not My Thing*, Rose Robbins (Article 29)

First level

- *Nen and the Lonely Fisherman*, Ian Eagleton and James Mayhew (Article 8 and 15)
- *Four Feet, Two Sandals*, Karen Lynn Williams (Article 22)
- *It's a No Money Day*, Kate Milner (Article 24)

Second level

- *Escape: One Day We Had to Run*, Ming and Wah (Article 22 and 38)
- *The Kites are Flying*, Michael Morpurgo (Article 15)
- *Maya and Her Friends*, Larysa Denysenko (Article 7 and 18)

Further resources

UNCRC and children's rights

- [UNICEF: UNCRC summary and full versions](#)
- [Amnesty International: Human rights education](#)
- [Children's Parliament: resources](#)
- Article 8: ["Why Getting Someone's Name Right Matters" from Ascend](#)
- Article 30: ["Why we have the right to an identity" from Amnesty International](#)

Scottish Book Trust

- For more resources exploring reading and social justice, see our [Read Woke resources](#) and our [Understanding and challenging racism resource](#).
- Our [Read Woke resource on *The Proudest Blue*](#) can be used to explore Article 14: freedom of thought, belief and religion.
- Use our book lists to find [more picture books](#) or [children's books](#) exploring migrant and refugee experiences.

Scotdec

- For a curated list of high quality teaching and learning resources about rights see [Scotdec's Signpost Series](#)
- For a range of educational resources exploring children's rights in different contexts, see [Scotdec's Signpost for Global Citizenship](#)
- For steps designed to support young people to create their own campaigns and lead the learning on issues including children's rights see [Scotdec's Active Global Citizens resource](#)