

# VIDEO RESOURCES AND CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION FOR EACH NARRATIVE

Each narrative includes additional contextual information related to the learner's story. This information includes

- a map of the country of origin
- images of refugees, refugee camps, or places of asylum related to the story
- background information about the nature of the conflict, relevant events, and linguistic diversity
- images of the ethnic community in Canada and short biographies of significant individuals of similar ethnic origins and either refugees or non-refugees

Lastly, each narrative ends with a list of hyperlinks to potentially useful video resources. A brief description of each video is provided. These resources may be used to introduce the narrative or provide additional contextual information. The video resources were selected to complement the learner's stories. The videos provide

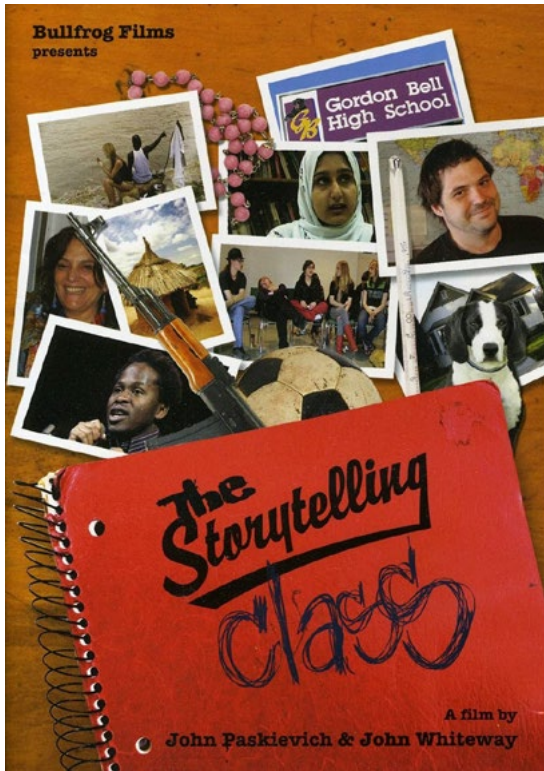
- information about the nation of origin of the learner, its history, and the nature of the conflict or war
- visual insights about the refugee camps and their characteristics as referenced in the learner's narrative or story
- additional stories of refugees from similar backgrounds and experiences
- evidence of the impact and challenges faced by refugees from that particular nation or group
- the life of refugees after immigration or repatriation



## ***Caution Concerning the Use of Resources about War and Refugee Experiences***

Films, videos, photographs, multimedia resources, artwork, and other educational and commercial resources may be very effective tools for exploring issues related to refugees within a professional development session, support group, or classroom. Narratives, interviews, profiles, and/or stories of refugee survivors are also powerful educational tools, whether they are documentary or fictional in nature. However, it is critical that teachers or other facilitators working with newcomers of refugee and immigrant backgrounds or in any other setting carefully preview, select, and plan for the use of these resources to ensure that they are used effectively and that learners/participants benefit from viewing and discussing the book, story, photograph, artwork, film, video, or other multimedia resource. Many of these resources deal with the impact of war on civilians, the experiences of refugees (especially children and youth), and child soldiers. The content and images depicted in the videos and in this document may deal with violence, deprivation, or other themes and be disturbing and emotionally challenging for viewers, readers, or participants, whether they be of refugee or non-refugee backgrounds. In addition, they often deal with long-term conflict that is complex and challenging. The information within the video resources included for the introduction has been found by some teachers, refugee support workers, and refugee awareness facilitators to be potentially useful. However, these videos have not been reviewed through a Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning formal resource review process, nor are they endorsed by the department. They, therefore, do not carry a Manitoba recommended designation. Film, video, and multimedia resources, as with all other literature or educational resource selections, should be reviewed by school division staff before they are used by or with students or staff during professional development activities. In this way, learner sensitivities and the perspectives of the student population, as well as the appropriateness of the resource for the intended learning audience and objectives are taken into account. In addition, the effectiveness of a particular resource will depend greatly on what the teacher or facilitator does in terms of preparing the audience before viewing, as well as the needs and interaction of learners during and post viewing.

## The Storytelling Class



© Doowah Design Inc. *The Storytelling Class*. Winnipeg, MB: Doowah Design Inc. Used with permission. All rights reserved.

[The Storytelling Class](#) is an excellent film to introduce the series of learner narratives, or to stimulate a discussion on the experiences of learners of refugee background in schools and the power of storytelling and healing. The film documents the experiences of the students and teacher who participated in an after-school storytelling project that took place at Gordon Bell High School in Winnipeg School Division. The school is situated in Winnipeg's downtown urban centre. Gordon Bell High School is one of the most diverse

schools in the city, with approximately 58 different languages spoken by the student body. Many of the students are new Canadians of refugee and war-affected backgrounds from Africa and other various war- or conflict-torn areas of the world. There is also a strong First Nations presence in the school as well as students from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Mark Kuly, a teacher in the school, inspired by a summer course at the University of Manitoba on storytelling for peace and human rights, initiated an after-school storytelling project through which he hoped new Canadian students would share stories with their Canadian-born peers. The project was intended to break down barriers of misunderstanding and stereotypes and build bridges of understanding and belonging across their respective cultures and histories. The stimulus for the cross-cultural interaction and dialogue centred on the students reading and discussing the book *A Long Way Gone* by Ishmael Beah. The book is a memoir of Beah's traumatic time as a child soldier in Sierra Leone's civil war and his immigration to the United States of America.

The voluntary after-school meetings took dramatic, difficult, and unexpected turns. One week, during the course of Marc Kuly's storytelling project, the class had an inspiring and powerful session with two guests. Beah and his American adoptive mother, Laura Simms, a renowned professional storyteller, were both in Winnipeg for a speaking engagement

and generously agreed to meet with the students. They talked with the students about their experiences and the healing power of storytelling. With their help, the students participating in the project began to listen to each other and find the commonality and sense of community that long eluded them.

*The Storytelling Class* is inspiring evidence of humanity's resilience and capacity for forgiveness, reconciliation, and redemption.

*The Storytelling Class DVD* is available from the Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning Library (Call # D 370.117 S86), the Winnipeg Public Library (Call # DVD 373.2380971 STO), the Elizabeth Dafoe Library at the University of Manitoba, and the University of Winnipeg Library.



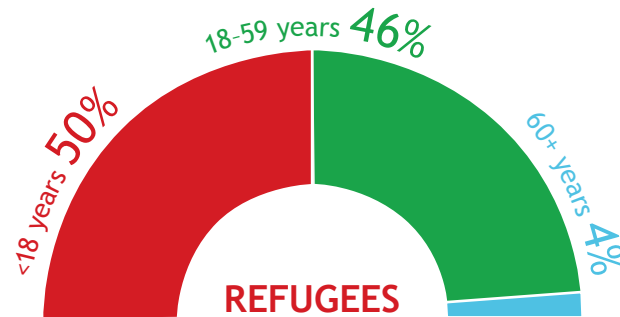
© John Paskievich. Gordon Bell High School. Winnipeg, MB: *The Storytelling Class*. Used with permission. All rights reserved.

# THE IMPACT AND EFFECTS OF WAR ON CHILDREN

Modern warfare does not take place in isolated or remote battlefields and is not fought between opposing countries. The vast majority of contemporary conflicts take place within a specific country, not between countries. In this new form of warfare, civilians are often caught in the midst of the fighting and routinely targeted. Presently, civilians make up to 90% of the casualties. (War Child)

“Today’s conflicts frequently involve different ethnic or religious groups, combining political, communitarian and criminal violence. Violence that appears indiscriminate may also be deliberately targeted at certain groups of civilians, and may include the use of sexual and gender-based violence. These armed conflicts may be aimed at securing social or economic power, and usually affect areas in repeated cycles. When UNHCR was established in 1950, armed conflict usually meant wars between States and generally allowed limited scope for humanitarian action until the conflict ended.” (THE STATE OF THE WORLD REFUGEES | 2012 | UNHCR SUMMARY)

Children account for the majority of civilian casualties. Mostly, they do not die from the weapons themselves, “but from preventable diseases that aren’t prevented or treated because the health systems and infrastructure have been destroyed.” (War Child) For example, to date more than 2.7 million children died in the Democratic Republic of Congo as a result of the conflict there, and the conflict continues. (War Child)



Children below 18 years constituted 50 percent of the refugee population in 2013, the highest figure in a decade.

Source: UNHCR Global Trends 2013. Used with permission. All rights reserved.

War affects children in many of the same ways that it affects adults. There are, nonetheless, specific effects on children. Firstly, children’s access to the care, empathy, and attention of adults who love them is often restricted or non-existent. In times of war, the loss of parents, the separation from parents, the parents’ extreme preoccupation with protecting and finding subsistence for the family, and the emotional unavailability of depressed or distracted parents lead to significant and frequent disruption in their attachments. In some cases, children may be in substitute or temporary care with someone who has limited connections or familiarity with them (distant relatives or neighbours, an orphanage). Many war-affected children lose all adult protection and become in the refugee parlance “unaccompanied children.” (Santa Barbara, 2006)

War also has an enormous impact on childhood, which may adversely affect the life trajectory of children much more than adults. Consider for a moment the impact on their young lives.

- Children often experience disrupted or no schooling. One of the most damaging effects of war is the way it disrupts and destroys children’s education. There is much evidence that education is really the best weapon against poverty and conflict.
- Children are often forced to move into refugee or displaced person camps where they may wait for years in extremely trying and difficult circumstances for normal life to resume, if it ever does.
- War destroys the local economy, agriculture, industries, jobs, and infrastructure. Since today’s conflicts usually take place in the poorest countries, the impact is huge. Parents struggle to feed their children and provide them with basic necessities. Children may be forced to stay at home to look after siblings or work instead of going to school, or they may even end up on the streets in situations of acute poverty.
- The bombs and bullets of war often kill, maim, and disable children. Some are recruited to become soldiers and are placed directly in the firing line. It is estimated that there are tens of thousands of young people under 18 serving in militias in about 60 countries. Hundreds of thousands of children die each year in warfare. When conflict has ended or ebbed, landmines