# Refugees: Welcome – Developing empathy

## Introduction

This activity is based around a short British Red Cross film (1 min 33 sec) called [‘I am a human’](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sH_1haveiKk).

## Learning objectives

In this activity young people will:

* explore how language can enforce and encourage negative views and stigma towards refugees and asylum seekers
* develop empathy for refugees and asylum seekers who might experience the harmful effects of stigma
* use facts to formulate more informed and respectful views on refugees and asylum seekers.

## Activity 2

1. Show [the film](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sH_1haveiKk) to learners, explaining beforehand that it is very short and they will need to concentrate in order not to miss anything.
2. Invite initial reactions to the film and record any ideas on a whiteboard or flipchart paper.

These could be individual word responses or more formed sentences. Save these for later reference.

1. Explain that you are going to show the film again. This time you are going to ask them to imagine what it might be like to be a refugee or asylum seeker in the UK and to read, see or hear such comments.

After watching the film through again ask young people to find a partner and share how it might make them feel.

1. A key theme in the film is ‘stop the fear’. Working in small groups (two to six) ask learners to write ‘Refugees: stop the fear’ in the centre of a large piece of paper (A3 minimum).

Around this ask them to write some of the words and phrases reflecting ‘fear’ that they remember from the film (you may wish to show it one last time and help them refer back to the initial reactions that were captured after the first and second viewings).

Next ask learners to write a fact or statement, perhaps using a different colour, connected to each of the fears that provides a more balanced or accurate story.

The facts presented in the video might help them with this.

They may also wish to use the [key facts sheet 2016](http://www.redcross.org.uk/~/media/BritishRedCross/Documents/What%20we%20do/Teaching%20resources/Lesson%20plans/Refugee%20week%202016/Key%20Facts.pdf) and any ideas from Activity 1 (if completed) to help them. The finished presentation might look something like below.

Only a small number of refugees come to the UK

Many have fled because their lives are in danger in their home country

Plague

Refugees: stop the fear

Send them back to where they came from

1. Give learners a chance to reflect on each other’s ideas and lead a whole group discussion using the following prompts:

* How might a more balanced story change any negative attitudes people might have about refugees or asylum seekers?
* How might a more balanced view influence the welcome that refugees or asylum seekers experience here in the UK?

## Extension

Use the film to analyse the language used to describe the refugee crisis and support young people to recognise the negative and dehumanising terms such as ‘plague’, ‘swarm’, ‘leeches’ etc.

Then ask learners to try and empathise with the position of the people in the film and their personal situation.

* Can they think of more positive language that could be used to describe the refugee crisis from a humanitarian perspective? What words might they use?
* How can they ensure that the language respects the human dignity of the people at the centre of the refugee crisis?

You could bring this work together by asking young people to use positive statements and words superimposed over images of refugees or asylum seekers to create an alternative perspective built around a theme of ‘we are all human’.