

The background image shows a classroom setting. In the foreground, two young girls are smiling and looking towards the camera. Behind them, other children are seated at desks, some looking at books. The wall is decorated with a grid of colorful children's drawings. A yellow box in the top right corner contains the text 'WHY COMICS?'.

WHY COMICS?

Why Comics? Educational Charity brings contemporary humanitarian and social issues (such as racism, conflict, migration, trafficking and climate change) into the classroom through interactive literary comic books based on real-life testimony.

Our resources build empathy and enhance learning for 7-18-year-old students and teachers alike, alongside national-curriculum relevant lesson plans to support multiple subjects.

**** Download our [Teaching Guidance Note](#) for a step-by-step guide to using our resources ****

Meet Dana...

After Dana's husband was kidnapped, presumed killed, by ISIS she was forced to flee her home in Manbij, Syria with her two young children. This is her story.

Dana and her children began their journey by making the long walk to Turkey. This was just the beginning. They paid thousands of dollars to smugglers to risk their lives to travel to Greece in a dingy. On arrival in Greece Dana and her children made a number of attempts to reach Vienna in Austria. They were arrested 7 times in Macedonia and each time they were sent straight back to Greece. They had faced abuse at the hands of both smugglers and police and had used almost all the money Dana had remaining.

Dana and her children eventually reached Serbia. We interviewed Dana in a refugee camp. They are waiting to be allowed through the border to Hungary, where they will continue their journey.

This story was commissioned by Care International UK



WHY COMICS?

BRINGING CONTEMPORARY
HUMANITARIAN AND SOCIAL ISSUES
INTO THE CLASSROOM



SOAS
University of London

Dana's Journey



DANA'S STORY



IN SYRIA YOU CAN DIE ANY DAY FROM A BOMB, BUT ON THIS JOURNEY YOU DIE EVERY DAY INSIDE. I WOULD TELL PEOPLE NOT TO TRAVEL TO EUROPE. I AM SO EXHAUSTED AND I AM AFRAID FOR MY CHILDREN'S FUTURE.



I'M DANA AND I'M FROM MANBIJ IN SYRIA. BEFORE THE WAR, WE WERE VERY COMFORTABLE AND HAPPY. I LIVED IN A BEAUTIFUL HOME WITH MY HUSBAND AND THREE CHILDREN. OUR HOME WAS LIKE HEAVEN.



WE HAD A GOOD LIFE - A BEAUTIFUL HOUSE, MONEY, GOOD JOBS AND SCHOOLING. I WAS A PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER AND MY HUSBAND HAD WAS SENIOR IN A GOOD COMPANY.



MUM CAN I DO SOME PAINTING AFTER SCHOOL?

YES OF COURSE DARLING, AFTER YOU FINISH YOUR HOMEWORK



WE WERE SO OPTIMISTIC AFTER THE REVOLUTION, WHEN OUR YOUNGEST SON WAS BORN WE NAMED HIM ABDUSALAM, WHICH MEANS PEACE. IT FELT LIKE A NEW START FOR SYRIA!

BUT THINGS BEGAN TO CHANGE. EXTREMISTS CAME TO OUR AREA ABOUT ONE YEAR AFTER THE CONFLICT STARTED. THEY TOOK OVER EVERYTHING.



WOMEN WEREN'T ALLOWED TO WORK AND GIRLS WEREN'T ALLOWED TO GO TO SCHOOL. THE EXTREMISTS BANNED ALL LESSONS EXCEPT STUDY OF ISLAM.



BUT I WANT TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL.

SHH! WE'LL TALK ABOUT IT AT HOME!

ONCE I WAS BEATEN IN THE MARKET PLACE BECAUSE I LIFTED UP MY VEIL FOR A SECOND.



I WAS SO FRIGHTENED...



THEN ONE DAY, MY HUSBAND WAS KIDNAPPED, PRESUMED MURDERED.



WE FOUND HIS ABANDONED CAR ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN AND HAD TO PRESUME THE WORST. WE DIDN'T KNOW WHO TO TRUST. MY HUSBAND DIDN'T TAKE SIDES HE JUST TRIED TO KEEP US SAFE.

IT'S BEEN TWO YEARS SINCE HE DISAPPEARED AND WE'VE HAD NO NEWS.



I BECAME VERY AFRAID FOR MY DAUGHTER BASMA'S SAFETY. SHE WAS ONLY 8 YEARS OLD AT THIS TIME AND UNDER CONSTANT HARASSMENT



MUM! I'M FRIGHTENED I WANT TO GO HOME!

I AM MORE AFRAID THAN I'VE EVER BEEN.

THE VIOLENCE AND OPPRESSION TOWARDS WOMEN JUST KEPT INCREASING. I SENT BASMA TO LIVE WITH MY SISTER IN VIENNA WHERE SHE WOULD BE SAFE.



THINGS KEPT GETTING WORSE. WE BEGAN PREPARING TO LEAVE SYRIA IN SECRET.

I CAN'T SELL OUR FLAT BECAUSE IT WOULD ATTRACT TOO MUCH ATTENTION SO I'M SELLING MY GOLD JEWELLERY.

HOW CAN YOU LEAVE? THE BORDERS ARE CLOSED.

I HAD HEARD THAT SMUGGLERS CHARGE A LOT.



MUMMMM I'M TIRED.

SHHH, WE MUST BE QUIET!

IT BROKE MY HEART TO LEAVE MY COUNTRY AND MY PEOPLE. IF THE ARMY OR EXTREMISTS CAUGHT US, WE WOULD HAVE BEEN KILLED.



WE WALKED 10 HOURS TO THE TURKISH BORDER. IT WAS A LONG, HARD, EXHAUSTING JOURNEY, BUT I KNEW THIS WAS ONLY THE BEGINNING.

MUMMY!

MY FEET HURT.



WE WAITED FOR DARKNESS BEFORE WE CROSSED THE BORDER. IT WAS A LONG, HARD, EXHAUSTING JOURNEY, BUT I KNEW THIS WAS ONLY THE BEGINNING.

\$3,000

NO IT'S TOO MUCH! I DON'T HAVE THAT.

FINE, \$2,000

\$1,500

URGH, FINE. \$1,600.



FROM IZMIR IN TURKEY WE TOOK A DINGY TO GREECE. EVERYONE WAS PETRIFIED AND HUDDLED TOGETHER.

MUM MY FEET ARE WET! I'M SCARED!

IT'S OK, I'VE GOT YOU. LET'S PRAY TOGETHER OK?



WE STAYED IN THE REFUGEE CAMP FOR TWO MONTHS WAITING FOR PAPERS TO TRAVEL TO ATHENS. I MET A SYRIAN FRIEND THERE.

I'M MANAL, MY HUSBAND HAS BEEN KILLED AND I'M TRYING TO JOIN MY DAUGHTER IN GERMANY.

SO YOU'RE BY YOURSELF?

LOOK MUM! THE FOOD IS COVERED IN FLIES!

WE DECIDED TO TRAVEL TOGETHER FOR PROTECTION.



THERE ARE SO MANY OF US!

THE SMUGGLERS PUT US ALL TOGETHER BECAUSE IT'S CHEAPER.

THE SMUGGLERS TOOK US OVER THE MOUNTAINS TO MACEDONIA. WE WEREN'T EVEN ALLOWED TO STOP TO USE THE BATHROOM.



WE WERE WALKING ALONG A ROAD WHEN SUDDENLY THE POLICE APPEARED—

STOP!

WE RAN FRANTICALLY, SCATTERING INTO THE FOREST TO ESCAPE.



WE HID IN THE FOREST FOR 4 DAYS WITH NO FOOD OR WATER. MY BAG WITH OUR MONEY AND ALL OUR PAPERS WAS LOST.

HOW DID WE END UP HERE? THIS IS NO WAY TO LIVE.

WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN TO US? I'M SO FRIGHTENED.

I'M SO SO COLD!



WE WERE ARRESTED BY THE POLICE 7 TIMES IN MACEDONIA AND SENT BACK TO GREECE. THEY DIDN'T TREAT ME OR MY SONS TOO BADLY BUT THE MEN WEREN'T SO LUCKY.



YOU FILTHY IDIOTS! GO BACK TO WHERE YOU CAME FROM!

THE FINAL TIME WE WERE SENT BACK TO GREECE WAS WHEN WE REACHED THE SERBIAN BORDER. WE WERE PUT IN PRISON FOR 3 DAYS. THIS ALMOST BROKE OUR SPIRITS.

WE'LL HAVE TO GO VIA ALBANIA AND KOSOVO TO SERBIA.

BUT IT'S SO DANGEROUS!

I KNOW, BUT WHAT CHOICE DO WE HAVE?!



WHEN WE GOT TO KOSOVO, THE ALGERIAN SMUGGLER DEMANDED MORE MONEY! HE LOCKED US IN A HOUSE FOR TWO DAYS WITH NO FOOD OR WATER.

ANOTHER 1,800 EUROS- YOU HAVEN'T PAID FOR YOUR SON!

I DON'T HAVE IT! PLEASE!! THIS ISN'T WHAT WE AGREED.

1,500 THEN!

I DON'T HAVE THAT KIND OF MONEY!



I CAN'T BELIEVE A FELLOW MUSLIM IS TREATING US LIKE THIS!



MUM I'M FRIGHTENED!

I WAS TERRIFIED THAT HE WOULD SELL MY SONS FOR THEIR ORGANS. WE'D HEARD OF SMUGGLERS TAKING CHILDREN IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH MONEY!

HE FINALLY RELEASED US WHEN I PAID AN EXTRA 300 EUROS- ALMOST ALL MY REMAINING MONEY.



SHHH, NOT NOW DARLING.

MUM...?

YOU'RE NOT WANTED HERE!

MANAL AND I USUALLY TRIED TO FIND A CHEAP HOTEL SO WE WOULDN'T HAVE TO SLEEP BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD. WE WERE AFRAID WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN TO US.



THERE'S HARDLY ANY MONEY LEFT! WHERE ARE WE GOING TO SLEEP?

WE COULD BE ATTACKED OR ROBBED, OR WORSE...

FINALLY WE ARRIVED IN SERBIA. WE'VE BEEN GOING TO CARE'S CENTRE TO GET HOT FOOD. WE CAN WASH IN SAFETY AND HAVE HOT SHOWERS. THERE ARE PLAY ROOMS WHERE MY SONS CAN PLAY WITH TOYS AND OTHER CHILDREN.

AT LEAST THEY TREAT US WELL HERE.

THANKFULLY THE BOYS CAN HAVE A FEW MOMENTS OF A NORMAL CHILDHOOD.



NOW WE'RE ON THE LIST WAITING TO GET THROUGH TO HUNGARY BUT THEY'VE CLOSED THE BORDERS.



THEY'RE ONLY ALLOWING 15-30 REFUGEES THROUGH A DAY.

AND MORE PEOPLE ARE ARRIVING HERE EVERYDAY!

IT'S JUST ONE HURDLE AFTER ANOTHER.

I THOUGHT THE WEST KNEW WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN SYRIA?



THAT WE ARE BEING RAPED AND BOMBED AND MURDERED, OUR HOMES DESTROYED, WITH NO CHANCE TO RAISE OUR CHILDREN...

MAMA, LOOK!

WHY DID I LEAVE MY COUNTRY? WE HAVE NO DIGNITY, WE'RE NOT TREATED LIKE HUMAN BEINGS. AT LEAST THE PEOPLE IN SERBIA HAVE BEEN GOOD TO US.

I CAN'T WAIT TO BE REUNITED WITH MY DAUGHTER IN VIENNA. SHE'S WHAT KEEPS ME GOING. BASMA AND MY SONS GIVE ME COURAGE AND ADDITIONAL STRENGTH.



WE ARE ALL THE SAME, WE ALL WANT THE BEST FOR OUR CHILDREN.

Discussion Points

1. What are your initial thoughts and feelings after reading Dana's Story?
2. Why did Dana have to leave Syria?
3. What would you do if you found yourself in Dana's position?
4. What does '**asylum seeker**' mean? What does '**refugee**' mean?
5. How do you think Dana feels now?
6. What do you think it is like to leave your country, family and friends?
7. What could governments do to prevent stories like Dana's?
8. Has Dana's story effected the way you think about refugees and asylum seekers?
9. How does Dana's story compare to stories you have read in the media?
10. How are you different, and similar to Dana?
11. How can we help to integrate refugees and asylum seekers into our communities?

If you want to talk to someone about the issues you've read about in the comic, please use the links below

- **War/Conflict**
[Child Helpline International](#)
- **Migration and refugee issues**
[Doctors Without Borders](#)
[Red Cross](#)
[International Rescue Committee](#)
[CARE International](#)
[Migrant Help UK](#)
- **General mental/emotional health support**
[Young Minds](#)
[Mind](#)

* Don't forget to read our page about [Staying Safe Online](#) *



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We Need Your Feedback!



To date, **over 600 schools in 27 countries** have provided overwhelmingly positive feedback about our **free interactive educational KS2-5 resources** and **accompanying national-curriculum suggested lesson plans**, co-designed with 7-18-year-old students and teachers. From September 2017, our materials will be disseminated to **over 25,000 schools worldwide**.

Please help us by filling out a [short anonymous SurveyMonkey questionnaire](#) after you have used our materials for our funders.
This helps ensure that our great resources remain free.



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Get in touch!

We'd love to hear from you



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