

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 Hasko...

Hasko comes from Damascus in Syria. Since civil war broke out in 2011, the violence, conflict and destruction has ravaged the population. Hasko and his wife became concerned for their and their children's safety. They decided that they had to leave. Their home has since been destroyed.

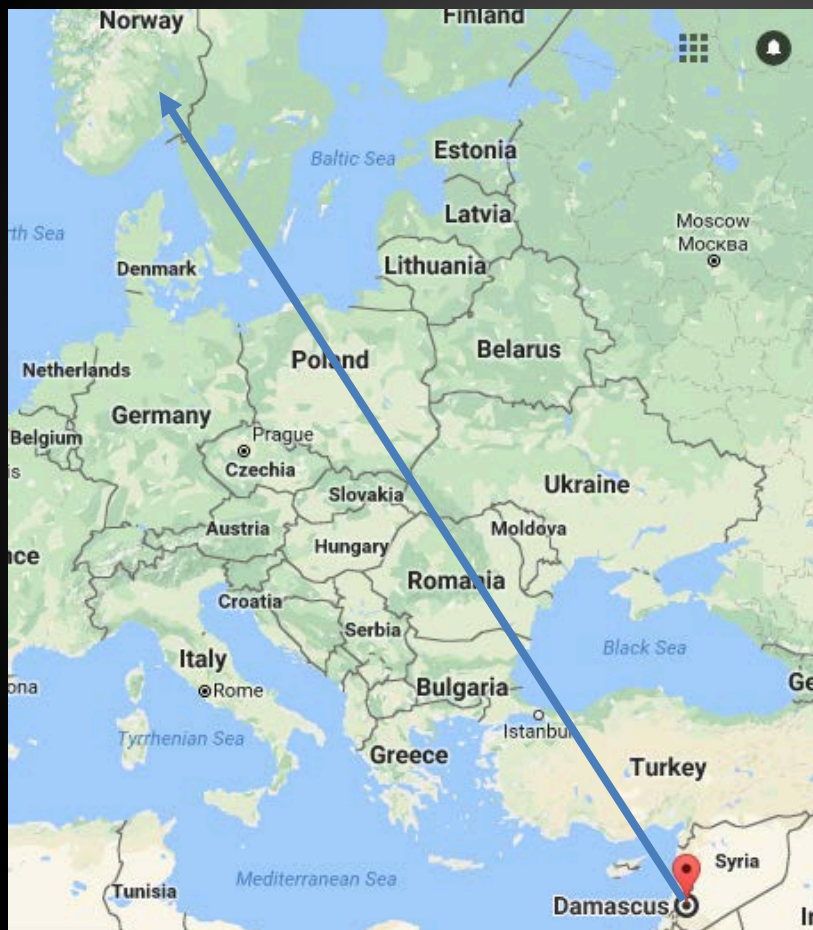
Hasko and his family made their way to Turkey. Without work Hasko knew that he had to get to Europe. The only way was to risk his life on a old and decrepit boat. When the boat ran out of fuel (after many days at sea) they were rescued by a red cross boat.

Hasko was brought to Italy. He travelled through Europe until he reached Scandinavia.

One year later Hasko was reunited with his family.



Where is Hasko from?



Hasko's journey
from Damascus,
Syria to Northern
Europe...

He travelled over
3500 km.

*Now read Hasko's
Story as a class*





OUR FRIENDS WERE OTHER ARTISTS, WRITERS AND POETS. ALL OF US FREE-THINKERS WATCHED THE PROTESTS BEGIN WITH NAÏVE OPTIMISM.

WE TOASTED TO A BETTER FUTURE!



BUT SABRIEH WAS MORE CAUTIOUS AND CONCERNED...

I GOT INTO TROUBLE WITH HER ONCE. WHEN VISITING A FRIEND WE SNEAKED OFF TO JOIN A MARCH...





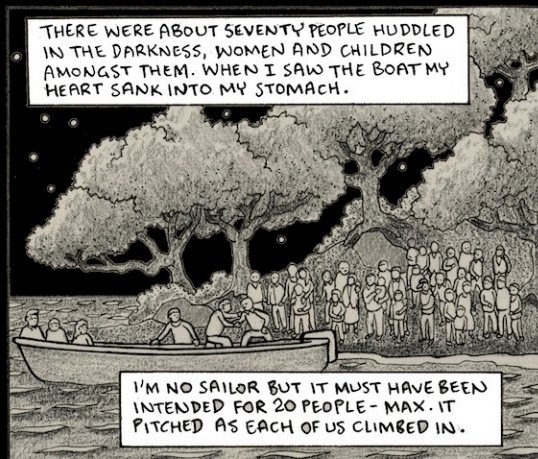
IN SOUTHERN TURKEY, IT'S NOT TOO HARD TO FIND A SMUGGLER. I WITHDREW \$6,000. YOU GAMBLE WITH YOUR LIFE ON THE SEA—BUT FIRST YOU GAMBLE WITH YOUR CASH. THESE GUYS OFTEN DISAPPEAR WITH PEOPLE'S LIFE—SAVINGS.



BUT A WEEK LATER, MY CONTACT WAS AT THE RENDEZVOUS. MY HEART BEAT FASTER. HAD I JUST PAID \$6,000 FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF DROWNING AT SEA? I TEXTED SABRIEH TO LET HER KNOW—THE PLAN WAS ON...



I TOLD HER I LOVED HER. TWICE. JUST IN CASE IT WAS THE LAST THING I EVER SAID TO HER. THE SMUGGLER DROVE ME OUT OF TOWN, PARKED UP BY A LITTLE WOOD AND LED ME THROUGH THE TREES TO THE WATER'S EDGE.



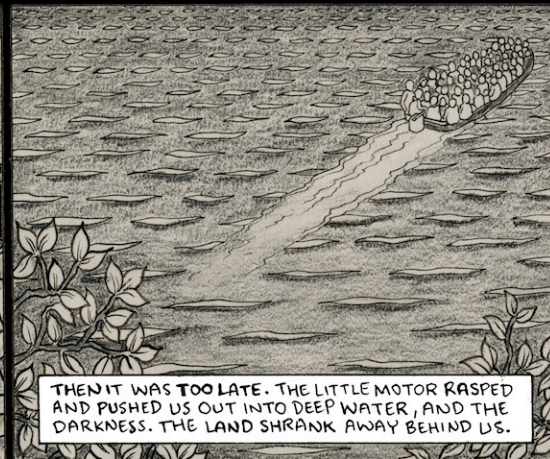
THERE WERE ABOUT SEVENTY PEOPLE HUDDLED IN THE DARKNESS, WOMEN AND CHILDREN AMONGST THEM. WHEN I SAW THE BOAT MY HEART SANK INTO MY STOMACH.

I'M NO SAILOR BUT IT MUST HAVE BEEN INTENDED FOR 20 PEOPLE—MAX. IT PITCHED AS EACH OF US CLIMBED IN.



WHEN EVERYONE WAS ABOARD WE WERE PACKED TIGHT. THE SMUGGLER PUSHED US OFF. WE SAT, WHITE-KNUCKLED AND RIGID SO AS NOT TO TIP THE BALANCE. A VOICE IN MY HEAD CRIED OUT—

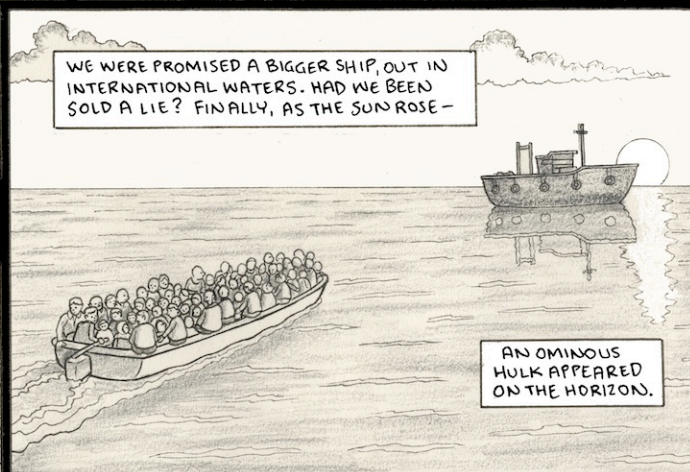
GET OFF!



THEN IT WAS TOO LATE. THE LITTLE MOTOR RASPED AND PUSHED US OUT INTO DEEP WATER, AND THE DARKNESS. THE LAND SHRANK AWAY BEHIND US.



THE WOMAN BESIDE ME GRIPPED HER SON TO KEEP HIM FROM SQUIRMING. I REALISED THAT I WAS HOLDING MY BREATH. WITH JUST A LEAN I COULD HAVE TIPPED THE BOAT AND DROWNED US ALL.



WE WERE PROMISED A BIGGER SHIP, OUT IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS. HAD WE BEEN SOLD A LIE? FINALLY, AS THE SUN ROSE—

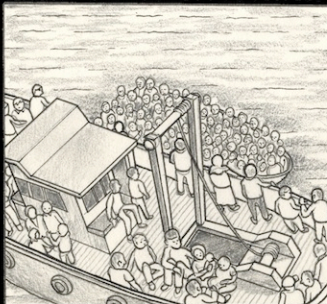
AN OMINOUS HULK APPEARED ON THE HORIZON.



WE CLAMBERED UP, ALL STIFF-LIMBED AND WEARY. OUR LITTLE BOAT TURNED—AND SET BACK TO SHORE TO COLLECT MORE PEOPLE.



WE WAITED FOR 48 HOURS AS THE SMALL BOAT RETURNED TWICE, CARRYING MORE AND MORE PEOPLE.



SEA-SICKNESS DISTRACTED FROM THE FEAR. AND FEAR DISTRACTED FROM THE SEA-SICKNESS.



THEN ON THE FIFTH NIGHT, THE WAVES GREW. THE AIR BECAME THICK AND BEGAN TO CRACKLE.



THERE MUST HAVE BEEN 200 OF US WHEN IT WAS DONE. I HAD THE FEAR AGAIN - TOO MANY PEOPLE...

OUR CAPTAIN WAS A HARD MAN. HE BARKED: "ANYBODY MAKES TROUBLE, THEY GO INTO THE SEA."

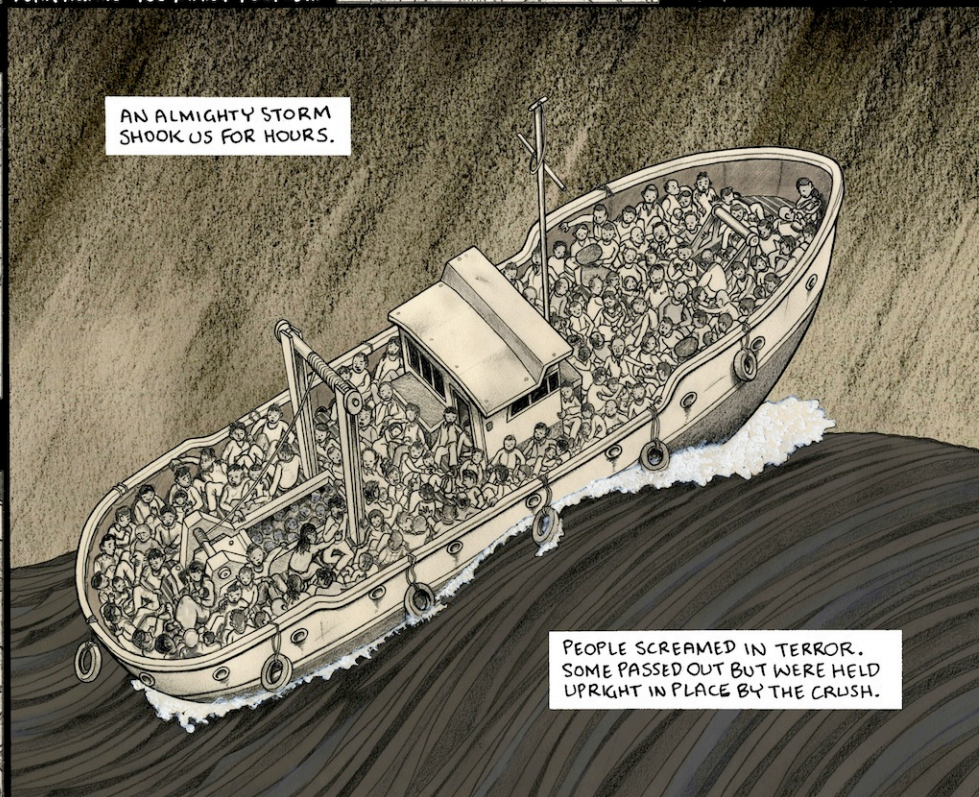


ROLLING ON THE WAVES, WE ALL BECAME SICK. THERE WAS NO ROOM TO MOVE TO REACH THE SIDE.

GOOD MANNERS WAS TO THROW UP ON YOURSELF AND NOT YOUR NEIGHBOUR. THE SHIP STANK.



AN ALMIGHTY STORM SHOOK US FOR HOURS.

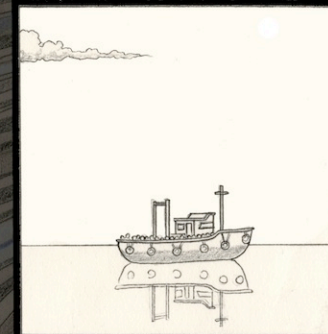


PEOPLE SCREAMED IN TERROR. SOME PASSED OUT BUT WERE HELD UPRIGHT IN PLACE BY THE CRUSH.

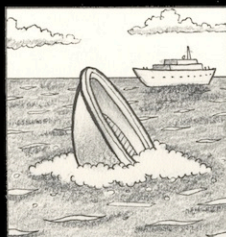
I HEARD A MAN SOBBING TO HIS FAMILY - "FORGIVE ME! FORGIVE ME FOR BRINGING YOU!"



AFTER THE STORM WE ALL WERE SILENCED. AND BY NOON, WE WERE ROASTING UNDER THE SUN AGAIN



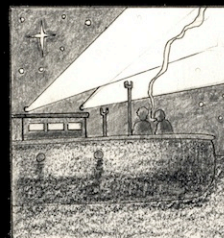
AFTER REFUGEES ARE RESCUED FROM THE SEA THE AUTHORITIES HOLE THEIR SHIPS. TO CUT THEIR LOSSES, SMUGGLERS OFTEN FAVOUR OLD AND DECREPIT CRAFT FOR THE FINAL LEG.



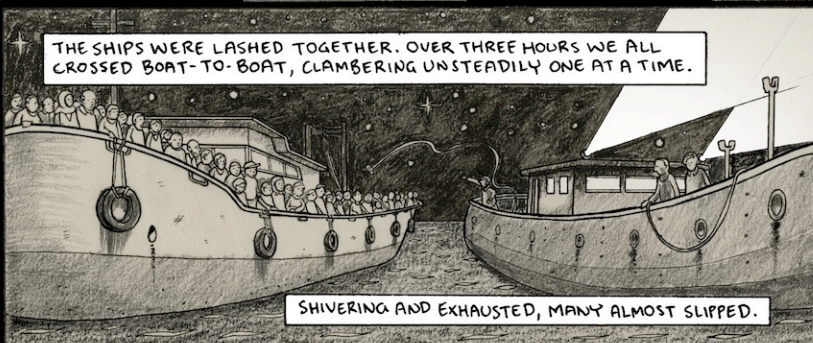
ON THE SIXTH NIGHT, A NEW BOAT CAME INTO VIEW. THE CAPTAIN TOLD US WE WERE ALL TO TRANSFER INTO THIS SECOND SHIP- A DANGEROUS OPERATION FOR SO MANY WEAK AND DISORIENTED PEOPLE.



EVEN IN THE GLOOM, AS WE PULLED UP ALONGSIDE THE NEW SHIP LOOKED TO BE A RUST-BUCKET. PEOPLE MURMURED UNEASILY. I HEARD ONE MAN SAY- "AT LEAST IT ISN'T COVERED IN VOMIT."



I SWORE UNDER MY BREATH. AGAIN MY LIFE WAS IN PERIL FOR THE SAKE OF ENRICHING A SMUGGLER AND BECAUSE THE EUROPEANS WANT TO DISCOURAGE REFUGEES BY NOT MAKING IT "TOO EASY."



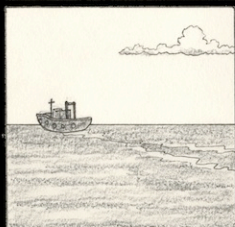
THE SHIPS WERE LASHED TOGETHER. OVER THREE HOURS WE ALL CROSSED BOAT-TO-BOAT, CLAMBERING UNSTEADILY ONE AT A TIME.

SHIVERING AND EXHAUSTED, MANY ALMOST SLIPPED.



SMALL CHILDREN WERE PASSED BETWEEN SHAKING HANDS

SO THEY WOULDN'T FALL INTO THE GAP BETWEEN AND BE SWALLOWED UP



AS SOON AS THE LAST OF US HAD CROSSED, OUR FIRST BOAT DEPARTED AND VANISHED ON THE HORIZON. NOW WE HAD A NEW CAPTAIN- DIFFERENT FROM THE FIRST, BUT JUST AS UNSETTLING.



HE WAS AN EGYPTIAN KID, 18 OR SO, WITH A "CREW" OF FOUR- ALL STONED OUT OF THEIR MINDS. "ASK ME NO QUESTIONS," THE CAPTAIN SAID. "I'M JUST HERE TO DRIVE THE BOAT."



TO PASS TIME I TOLD THE LITTLE ONES STORIES AND TAUGHT THEM SONGS. THEY SEEMED LISTLESS AND SAD. THEN, ON THE THIRD DAY WE RAN OUT OF FOOD. AND THEN, FUEL.

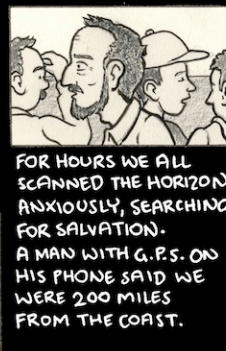


WE DRIFTED IN EERIE SILENCE.

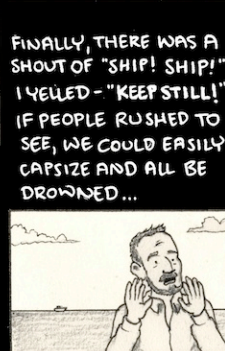
THE HORIZON WAS IDENTICAL IN ALL DIRECTIONS.



OUR BOY-CAPTAIN STRUGGLED WITH A CRACKLING SATELLITE PHONE. FINALLY, HE REACHED THE ITALIAN COASTGUARD AND REQUESTED HELP.



FOR HOURS WE ALL SCANNED THE HORIZON ANXIOUSLY, SEARCHING FOR SALVATION. A MAN WITH G.P.S. ON HIS PHONE SAID WE WERE 200 MILES FROM THE COAST.



FINALLY, THERE WAS A SHOUT OF "SHIP! SHIP!" I YELLED- "KEEP STILL!" IF PEOPLE RUSHED TO SEE, WE COULD EASILY CAPSIZE AND ALL BE DROWNED...



WHEN THE COASTGUARD PULLED UP ALONGSIDE THEY WORE ALL WHITE: GLOVES, HATS, MASKS...

IN MY DELIRIUM, THEY LOOKED LIKE ANGELS.

WE WERE TAKEN ABOARD A RED-CROSS SHIP, AND BROUGHT TO SHORE IN ITALY. AS WE CAME NEAR THE LAND, WE SAW BEACHES WITH HOLIDAY-MAKERS ON SUN LOUNGERS, THEIR CHILDREN PLAYING...



AT PORT, PHOTOGRAPHERS AWAITED US. THEY SNAPPED OUR PICTURES AS WE HOBBOLED OFF THE SHIP ON SHAKING LEGS. MY BALANCE WAS THROWN BY THE SOLID GROUND BENEATH MY FEET AT LAST.



WE WERE LED TO A HUGE HANGAR-LIKE BUILDING, WHICH HAD BEEN MADE INTO SOMETHING LIKE A FACTORY FOR THE PROCESSING OF REFUGEES. ALL DAZED, WE JUST DID AS WE WERE TOLD, WENT WHERE WE WERE LED.



I BRUSHED MY TEETH AND SHOWERED AWAY THE STENCH AND GRIME OF THE BOAT, FEELING LIFE RETURN TO MY BODY, WHILE OUTSIDE THEY BURNED OUR SOILED CLOTHES.



I WAS GIVEN A FRESH OUTFIT - ILL FITTING BUT CLEAN AND VERY WELCOME. I WAS INTERVIEWED KINDLY AND FED AT A LONG AND CROWDED TABLE.



THERE WERE PEOPLE AROUND ME FROM ALL PLACES - ERITREANS, IRAQIS, LIBYANS... I HEARD TERRIBLE ACCOUNTS OF ESCAPE FROM MASSACRES, BOMBS, TORTURE, RAPE... AND DROWNING AT SEA.



AND THEN - I CALLED SABRIEH. WE WERE BOTH LAUGHING AND CRYING. I SPOKE TO THE KIDS. I FELT VERY FAR AWAY. FOR FOUR DAYS, I RECOVERED - THEN WAS ALLOWED TO LEAVE.



I WANTED TO LOOK INCONSPICUOUS SO I BOUGHT NEW CLOTHES.



THEN I CAUGHT A BUS GOING NORTH.



I TRAVELED THROUGH EUROPE BY ROAD AND RAIL, LIKE ANY OTHER BACK-PACKER. MY MONEY DWINDLED - BUT FINALLY I MADE IT HERE...



THIS IS THE APARTMENT I RENT. YOU ARE WELCOME

I STARTED PAINTING AGAIN. MY AGENT IS KEEN FOR NEW WORK. AND, I APPLIED FOR ASYLUM. IF IT IS GRANTED, I WILL SEND FOR SABRIEH AND THE CHILDREN TO JOIN ME.



I AM SO GRATEFUL TO BE HERE. BUT ALSO UPSET. WHEN I THINK OF THAT JOURNEY, AND ESPECIALLY OF THOSE WHO DROWN. I DIDN'T WANT TO HAND MONEY TO THOSE CRIMINALS. THERE WAS NO NEED.



I COULD HAVE FLOWN US HERE - BUSINESS CLASS! LIKE CIVILIZED PEOPLE, WITH A GLASS OF WINE AND THE CHILDREN WATCHING "JURASSIC PARK." BUT OF COURSE, WE REFUGEES ARE "NOTHING BUT A BURDEN..."





AFTER A YEAR OF BEING APART, WE WERE GRANTED ASYLUM.
SABRIEH AND THE KIDS JOINED ME HERE TO START OUR LIVES AGAIN.

Discussion Points

1. What are your initial thoughts and feelings after reading Hasko's Story?
2. Why did Hasko have to leave Syria? Why did Hasko have to leave Turkey?
3. What would you do if you found yourself in Hasko's position?
4. What does it mean to **apply for asylum**?
5. How do you think Hasko feels now?
6. What could governments do to prevent stories like Hasko's?
7. Has Hasko's story impacted the way you think about **refugees**?
8. How does Hasko's story compare to the stories in the media?
9. How was Hasko received when he arrived in Italy?
10. How are you different, and similar to Hasko?
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

- **Asylum Seeking:** [Refugee Council](#), [Government Asylum Helplines](#)
- **General mental/emotional health support:** [Young Minds](#), [Mind](#)
- **Migration and refugee issues:** [Doctors Without Borders](#), [Red Cross](#), [International Rescue Committee](#), [CARE International](#), [Migrant Help UK](#)
- **Racism:** [Childline](#)
- **War/Conflict:** [Child Helpline International](#)

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



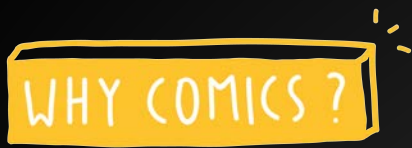
BRINGING CONTEMPORARY
HUMANITARIAN AND SOCIAL ISSUES
INTO THE CLASSROOM

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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HUMANITARIAN AND SOCIAL ISSUES
INTO THE CLASSROOM



SOAS
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Get in touch!
We'd love to hear from you



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