



# **REFUGEE EDUCATION POLICY ENACTMENT AND PRACTICE: THEORETICAL MOVES TOWARDS A SOCIALLY JUST APPROACH**

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# WHAT I HOPE TO DO TODAY

Share the theoretical framework that has been developed with Swedish and English practitioners and share emerging pedagogical principles from this work.

And to focus on the following questions:

1. How useful is the theoretical framework we propose for practitioners in schools?
2. How can teacher educators draw on this in their work with beginning teachers and partnership schools?
3. How can working with beginning teachers in this way shape future educational policy and practice for refugee pupils?

# CONTEXT

- Human movement within and across borders is not a new phenomenon. However recent global events have led to an increase in forced migration and the idea in 2015 of a 'refugee crisis'
- More than **12,500,000 displaced children** across the world (UNHCR, 2018)
- Young refugees have an entitlement to an '**inclusive and equitable quality education and to lifelong learning opportunities**' in their resettlement context (SDG4 UNESCO, 2015), and this has implications for national education system in destination countries.
- There is a need for research on the newly arrived in Europe to drive humane, socially just policy and practice to best serve the needs of young people who have '**given up their past in order to have a future**' (Kohli 2014, 85); children who, at the point of becoming forced migrants and refugees, **stopped experiencing an everyday existence.**
- Our focus for our work is on young people's educational experiences after they have made the journey to resettle in Sweden or England.

# INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION BETWEEN LUND UNIVERSITY AND UNIVERSITY OF NOTTINGHAM –BOTH SEEKING TO UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Three important principles underpin our work:

- First, a humanitarian issue of the scale of the global refugee ‘crisis’ demands socially just responses from resettlement destinations.
- Second, education is a fundamental means of integrating young refugees into their new context.
- Third, this education provision should be both inclusive and high quality thereby benefitting both newly arrived students and their peers in the resettlement context.



**First through an analysis of policy...**

# INITIAL FINDINGS FROM POLICY ANALYSIS

## The English perspective – invisibility

- Who we are talking about? How do we know the extent of the issue? No accurate data
- No specific national education policy documentation since 2007 (since 2010 -focus is on tracking academic progress of individuals, though refugees may fall under category of ‘vulnerable groups’)
- Immigration and welfare discourses
- Access to education (finding a school place) – highly bureaucratic, status and housing dominate
- Within school, EAL identity dominates, limited curriculum diet (most marked for older children)
- Safeguarding, Prevent and British Values

## The Swedish perspective – visibility

- Large amount of policy documents regarding access, reception and organisation for learning for the newly arrived
- Policy focusing on inclusion and the rights of the child
- Swift access to schooling (‘paperless children’ included)
- Recommendations for schools’ work with newly arrived students:
  - personalised curricula,
  - using the student’s ‘strongest language’,
  - focus on their strengths - mapping knowledge and skills,
  - social integration,
  - protecting ‘paperless children’

**But what does this look like in practice?**

# FRASER'S 'PARTICIPATORY PARITY' - A MORAL BASIS FOR SHAPING EQUITY IN SCHOOLS

'social arrangements that permit all to participate as peers in social life ...overcoming injustice means dismantling institutionalised barriers that prevent some people from participating on a par with others, as full partners in social interaction' (Fraser 2007: 27)

## *If the barrier is:*

viewed as economic

because of cultural barriers

thought of as a political issue

## *the solution could be:*

**redistribution** of material or human resources

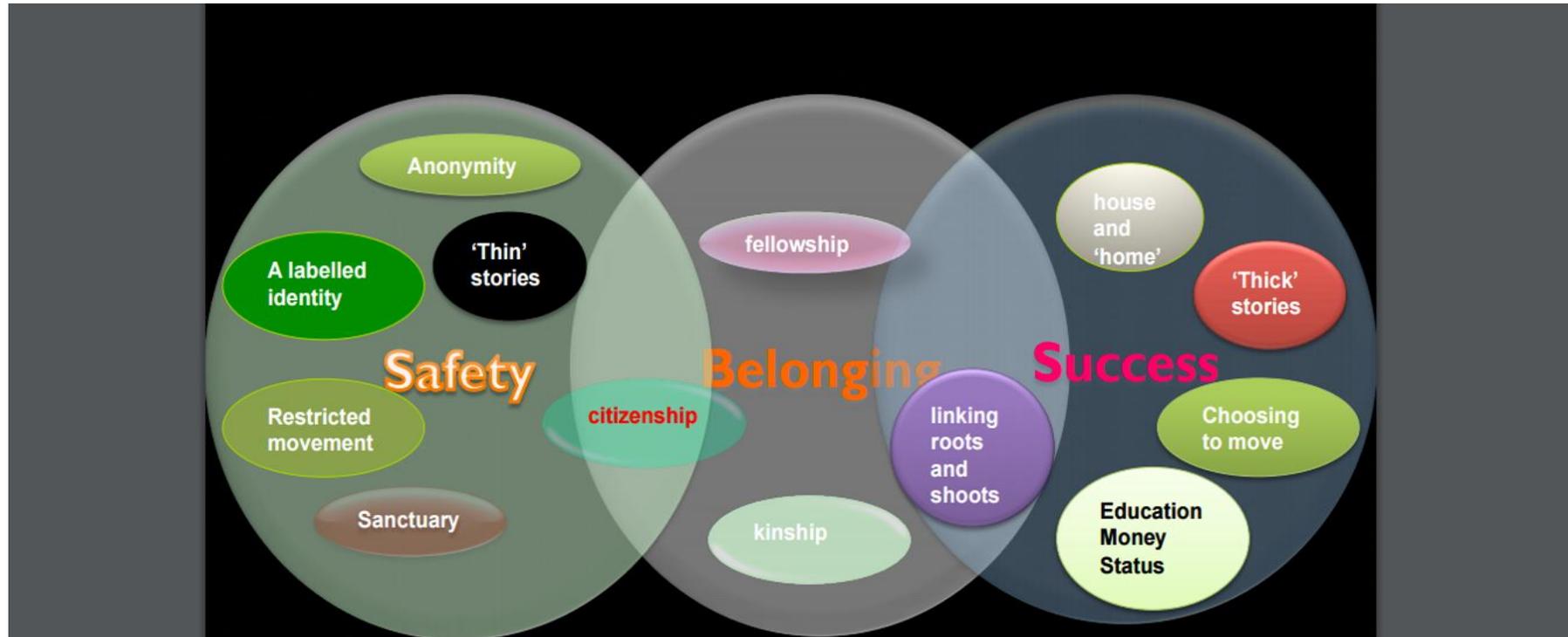
**recognition** of cultural values and recognitive measures

**representative** measures, increased ways of according equitable representation/  
political voice

(following Keddie 2012)

# RESUMPTION OF ORDINARY LIFE

RAVI KOHLI (2011)



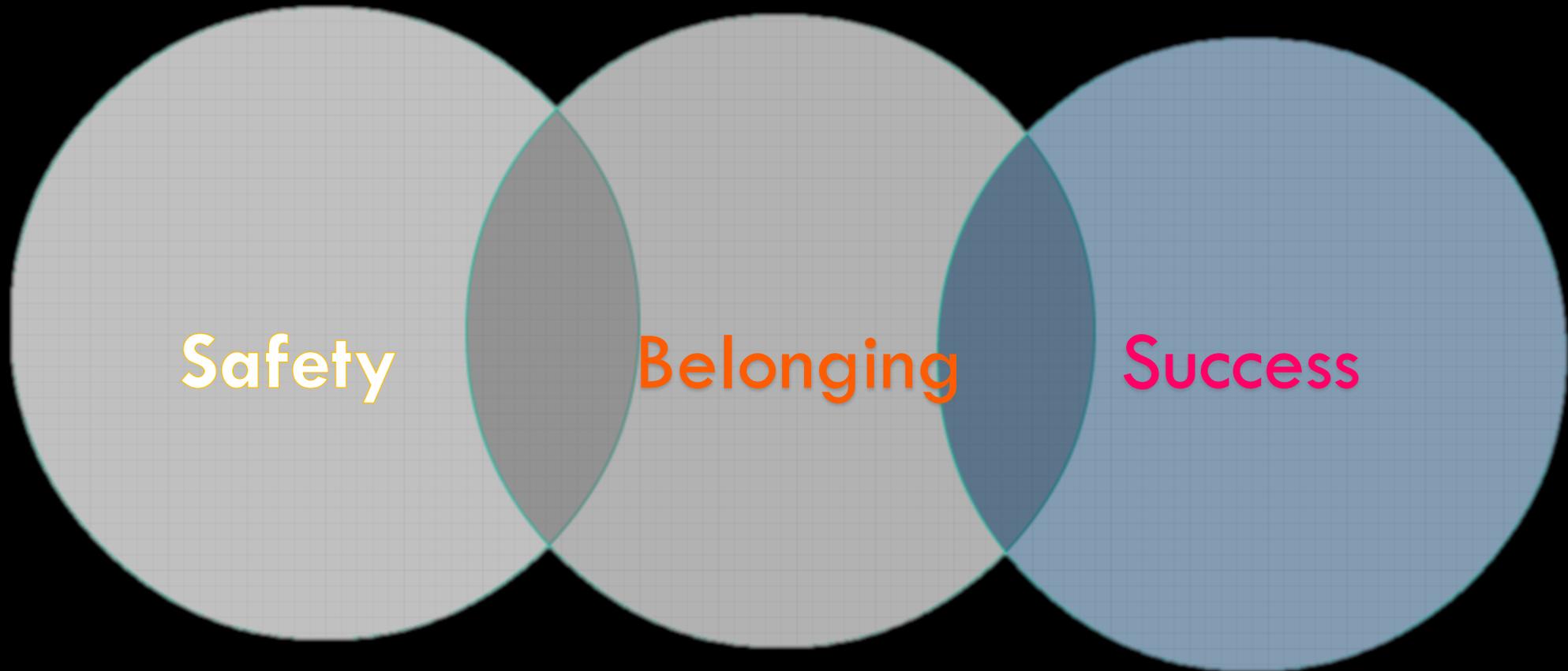
acclimatise

adapt

participate

absorb

reciprocate



**What is the role of EDUCATION in the resumption of ordinary life?**

An operational basis for shaping equity in schools?

# HOW DO PRACTITIONERS 'DO' POLICY?

1. How useful is the theoretical framework we propose for practitioners in schools?
2. How can this dialogue with school leaders and practitioners shape future educational policy and practice for refugee pupils?

# 1. HOW USEFUL IS THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK WE PROPOSE FOR PRACTITIONERS IN SCHOOLS?

Instinct to hone in on the **operational frame** – Kohli's three concepts (is this because as humans we instinctively focus on human need – what our needs are, what others' needs are, how we can fulfil these for others?)

Safety, belonging and success

The **practitioners** in our interviews and discussions seemed to move through three stages:

1. Systematize the three concepts and their relationships to each other (putting them alongside each other, relating them and linking them, levelling them)
2. (Re) define (clarified some of the ambiguity of the labels and clarifying meaning for them)
3. Utilise the concepts as lenses to interrogate and question their practice.

The **young people** were able to use the concepts to make sense of (and evaluate) their experiences.

# REDISTRIBUTION IN THE CONTEXT OF REFUGEE EDUCATION – POLICY ENACTMENT IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

**Barriers:**  
**Lack of specific funding**  
**No transparent data on numbers**  
**A homogenous label (EAL) masking very diverse needs**  
**Whole school accountability pressures**  
**'it is mysterious funding'**



Induction programme  
Curriculum access (breadth)  
Sets (lower or top?)  
Extracurricular (enrichment)  
Pastoral access (tutor group, counsellor, careers guidance)  
To experience time in setting differently (e.g. *'reviewing the timetable weekly'*; starting in the year below, *'starting the day backwards'*, in year admissions)

Relies on:  
Responsibility – agency to advocate, to be flexible, to plug gaps in the system  
Shared commitment to inclusive ethos from SLT down and vice versa

# RECOGNITION IN THE CONTEXT OF REFUGEE EDUCATION – POLICY ENACTMENT IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

**Barriers**  
Misrecognition and labelling  
Maldistribution of resources



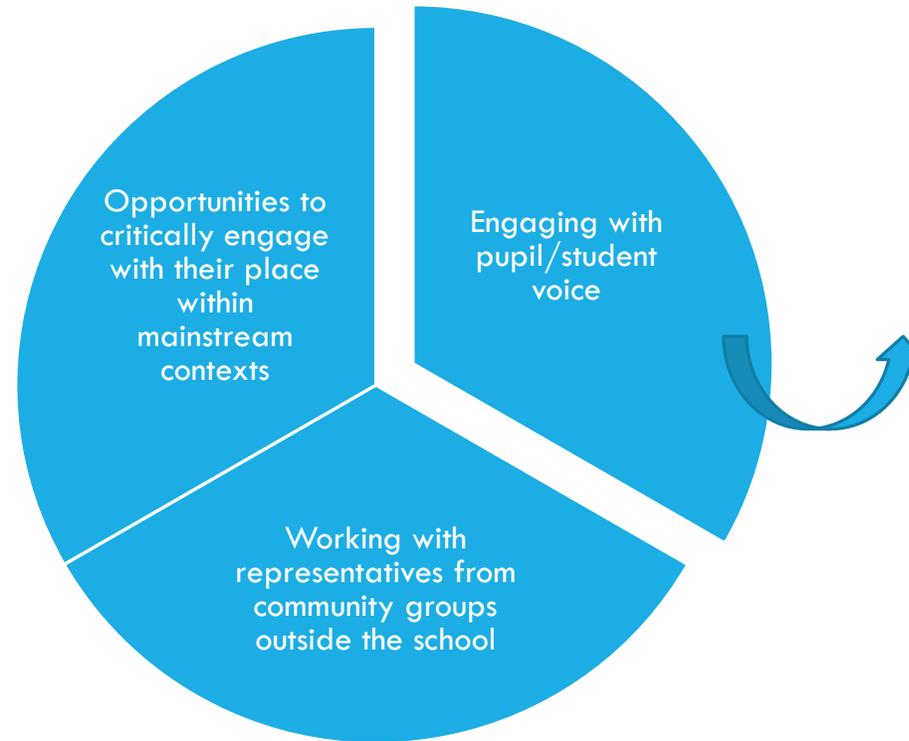
*‘If we genuinely want to create a society where we look out for each other and people respect each other and care for each other then surely schools are a microcosm of that and have a part to play in terms of building the sort of society we want for the future. That is not elitist or exclusive and it has to be made up of every community in our society. The role of the refugee in that has been a long and proud history, in many ways, that this country has had where different groups have come to this country and made it better and our responsibility is to take in those children and to be able to support them on their journey before they go on and support us in the future’.*

Depends upon  
Importance of shared historical memory of previously supportive policy  
A shared inclusive ethos (beyond tokenistic)  
And an understanding of what this can bring

# REPRESENTATION IN THE CONTEXT OF REFUGEE EDUCATION – POLICY ENACTMENT IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

## Barriers

Assumption that language is a barrier to student voice  
Cultural barriers to sharing issues publically (background of collectivist cultures)  
Needs a systemic structured approach with voices at different levels of policy making  
Opportunities to consult with adult refugee community  
*(especially those who were*



Student council/pupil panels  
Circle time *'I think our backpack is much bigger'*  
Student evaluations/feedback

Relies upon: a commitment for dialogue to engage with specific barriers to participation in their new society.  
*BUT the labelling of refugee and seeking to ensure equity of representation might assume all refugees are the same and does not take account of other aspects of identity and experience. It also begs the question when does one stop being seen as a refugee... – the operational frame tries to understand this from the experiences of the young person within the education system as they try to lose the label and move towards an ordinary life..*

# THE POWER OF WORKING BOTH WITH THE MORAL AND OPERATIONAL FRAMES

Initially (phase 1) we focused on the bigger picture – participatory parity in big policy analysis

Through dialogue and observation in phase 2, we could see that Fraser's concepts can help us and the practitioners in our focus group make sense of big policy enactment and small policy in context ... and that policy is not static- we all 'do' policy and can shape policy enactment.

## **The moral frame appears to become dialectal**

The participants reflected that the participatory parity concepts gave them a language to understand their context and this was felt to be empowering.

## **The operational frame offered a clarifying perspective**

The participants used the concepts as a means of categorising, classifying and identifying their practice – and it allowed them to question it too.

# Resumption of ordinary life and education?



**Belonging** – a multi-layered concept based on opportunities for developing positive relationships:

- with self,
- with peers (in and out of school)
- with communities (in and out of school)
- with place
- with the new society

Marked by signifiers of belonging (uniforms, badges, participation in events, activities, exhibitions, teams) along with locational and relational ties.

Belonging is a dialogic process (has to involve others as well as the individual)

Enhanced by

- making implicit explicit - understanding the codes and rules, clear signposts and resources for navigating an education system and societal norms
- developing individual assets to feel valued
- teaching tolerance, promoting difference
- working with peers to create a new society where we belong together,
- preparing for their future and their hopes and goals for life.



Resumption of meaningful lives through education

**Safety** – a multifaceted concept (physical, emotional, mental) which permeates life in and out of the educational setting

Supported by:

- a physical safe space,
- creating environments for trust building, experiential learning; talking (or choosing not to); social and emotional learning; risk-taking
- consistent and explicit expectations, high aspirations, with understanding that mistakes/misunderstandings will occur
- advocates (peers, teachers and SLT)

Demonstrated by understanding how this current context will fulfil present needs and prepare for future ambitions

Preparing for belonging



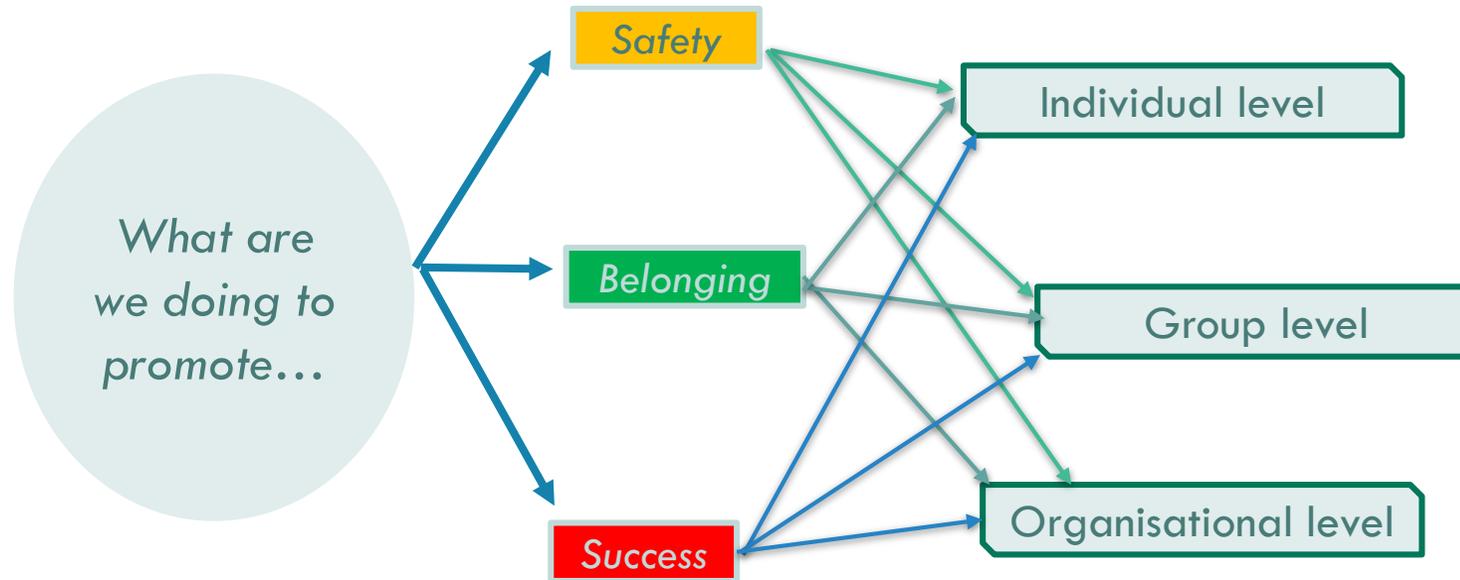
**Succeeding** – a multifarious concept illustrated when individuals feel they

- can be authentic and have a positive sense of wellbeing,
- know how to make meaningful choices about next steps,
- are valued and able to contribute as members of society

Success is a meaningful point of departure rather than something at the end - a continuous process

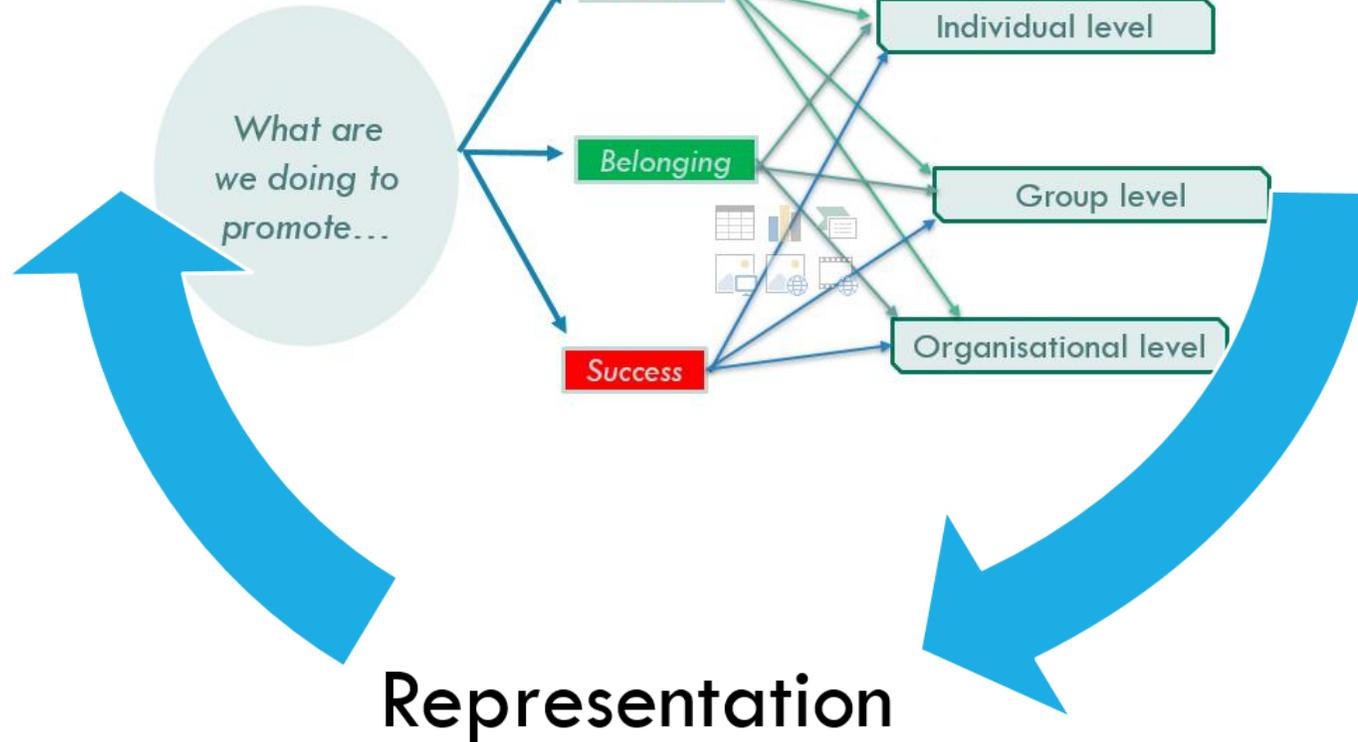
Learning doesn't start and stop with school – building the foundations of lifelong learning

# USING THE CONCEPTS TO QUESTION POLICY AND PRACTICE



# Redistribution

# Recognition



# BEGINNINGS OF PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES...

1. The child and their potential contribution to society should be at the heart of all educational policy making.
2. Policy at (inter) national and local school and classroom level should promote **safety, belonging** and **success** of each child.
3. Every school, every stakeholder and each member of staff should be responsible for ensuring that the policy is enacted, with appropriate training.
4. This is underpinned by:
  - an awareness of the social, cultural and political issues leading to migration
  - an understanding that **all our** identities change and adapt with migration and that this can be beneficial for all
  - an awareness of what young people need to know and understand in order to experience safety, belonging and success
  - a recognition that schools need to know where to be flexible and where there is a need for consistency
  - respectful sharing of information about an individual's circumstances and the knowledge and training to offer appropriate support
  - a recognition of the assets that each young person brings with them
  - an appreciation of success as a multifaceted concept experienced when potential is fulfilled and is manifested in different ways.
5. This all requires a commitment **to questioning how individuals, groups and organisations promote safety, belonging and success for each child**...and ...if barriers to this are due to mis-redistribution, mis-recognition or mis-representation
6. ...if these are the right questions then we need to commit to keep coming back to them.

# KEY MESSAGES (SO FAR...)

1. There needs to be a commitment to understand the issues associated with including refugee and asylum seeking children in our education provision – this is an ongoing process not a defined set of answers
2. Refugee students are not a homogenous group, EAL provision is not enough, there is a need for specific policy and guidance and ongoing professional development for those in the field
3. The conceptual model underpinning this research speaks to practitioners and school leaders – can it speak to policy makers too?
4. The conceptual model has been co-designed with experienced educators located in sites of ‘good practice’ (policy memory) – it is being trialled in Sweden (where there is less experience though strong policy commitment) and needs to be explored in newer dispersal locations in England.

# 2. HOW CAN TEACHER EDUCATORS DRAW ON THIS IN THEIR WORK WITH BEGINNING TEACHERS AND PARTNERSHIP SCHOOLS?

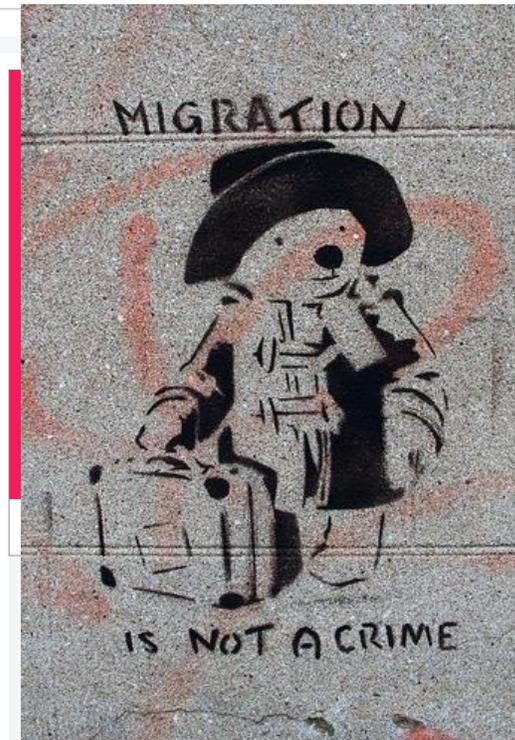
What does the term 'refugee' mean?

Is it different to asylum seeker/ new arrival/ migrant/ immigrant?

Education of?  
Education about?

What images come to mind?

The screenshot shows a news article from the Sun newspaper. The headline is "FORTRESS BRITAIN Border Force ships patrol UK coast as Navy is sent in to solve Channel migrant crisis". Below the headline is a sub-headline: "Sajid Javid and Gavin Williamson are arguing about who should pay for the Navy to get involved". The article is by Hugo Cye, dated 3rd January 2019, 12:49 pm, and updated at 3:52 pm. It has 26 comments. The main text states: "BORDER Force patrols restarted today as the Government scrambles to solve the Channel migrant crisis. A cutter was seen off the coast of Dover this morning as Sajid Javid requested additional help from the Royal Navy." Below the text is a photograph of a Border Control cutter patrolling in the English Channel. The photo is credited to PA-Press Association.



# DOES IT HELP TO IMAGINE A COUNTERFACTUAL NARRATIVE?

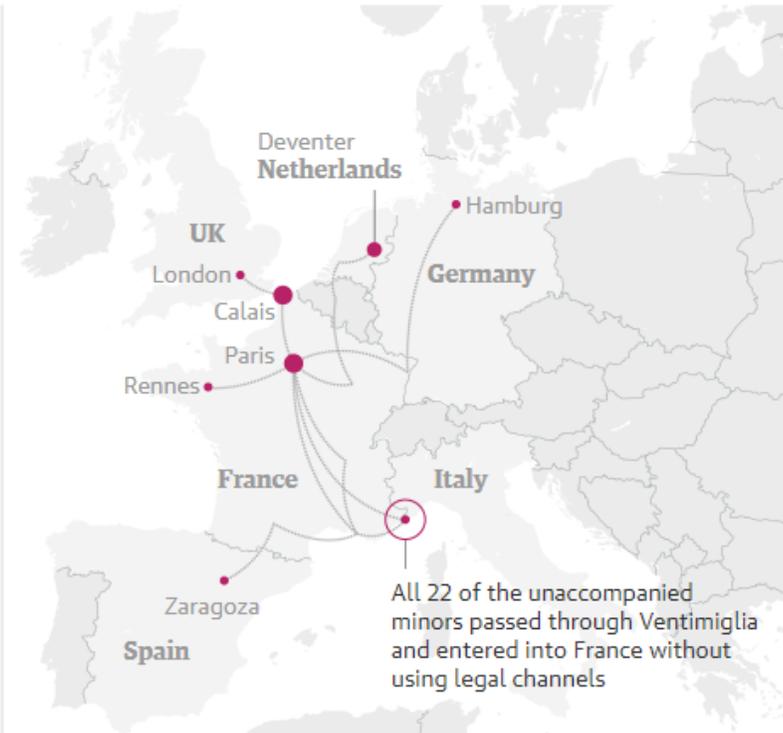
Imagining British refugees fleeing civil war in the UK

# 'INJURED, HUNTED, LOST: MAPPING JOURNEYS OF REFUGEE CHILDREN AIMING FOR UK' (THE GUARDIAN 13.7.2017)

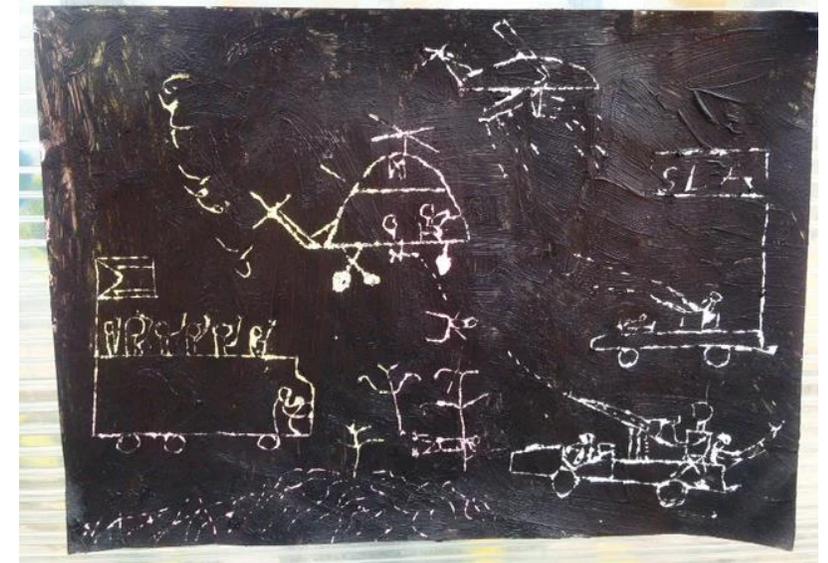
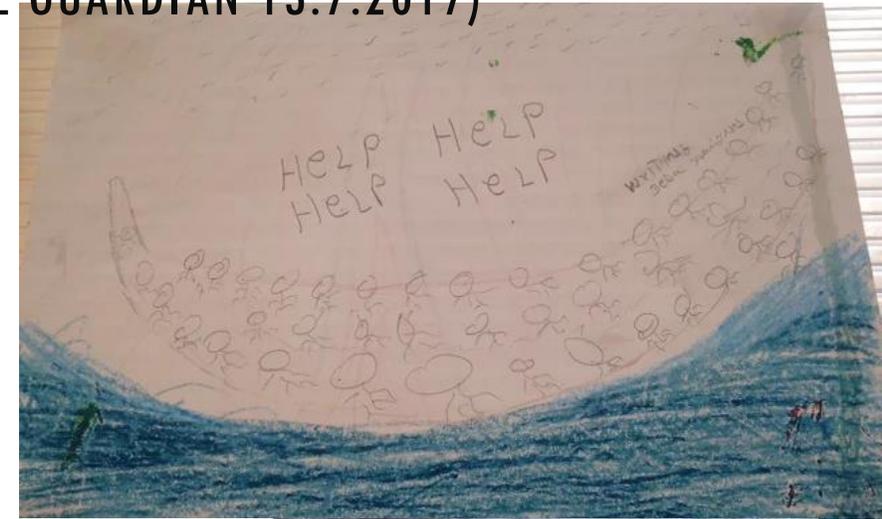
## Where the 22 unaccompanied children ended up

Monitored by Refugee Youth Service Italy over an eight-week period from May to July 2017

- One in Hamburg  
Claimed asylum
- Three in Deventer  
Claimed asylum
- One in London  
To be confirmed
- Five in Calais  
On the move
- Five in Paris  
On the move
- One in Rennes  
Claimed asylum
- One in Zaragoza  
Settled
- One in Ventimiglia  
On the move
- Four unaccounted for



Guardian graphic | Source: Refugee Youth Service, Italy



# STORIES BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Arif



Hassan



# ‘QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL’... IN REALITY



‘caught between the global promise of universal human rights, the definition of citizenship rights within nation states, and the realization of these set of rights within everyday practices’

‘how to realize the right to education for all and ensure opportunities to use that education for future participation in society?’

(Dryden-Peterson, 2016, 473)

Where is Hassan caught?

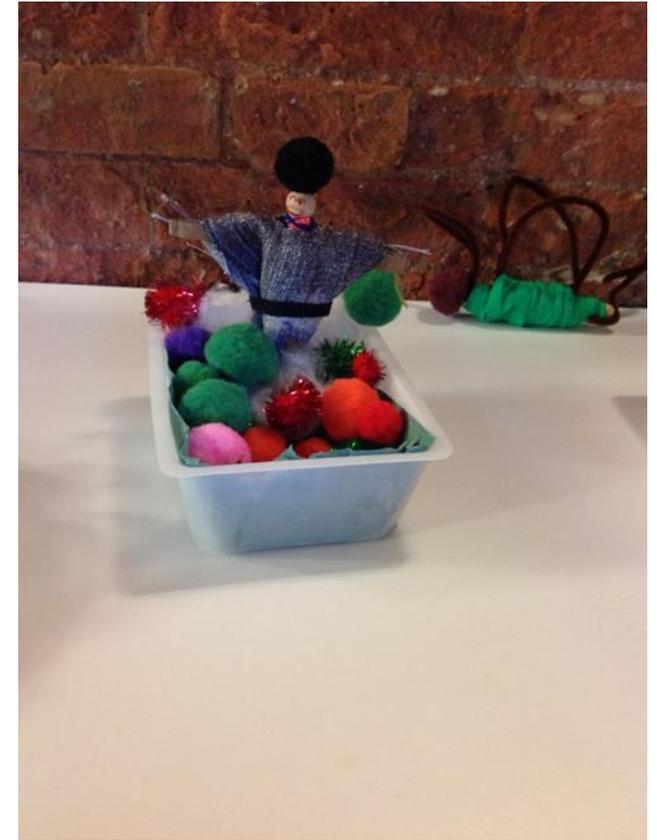
# HASSAN — WHAT COULD HIS STORY BE?

Currently waiting for a place in school.

If he goes to school he will be labelled EAL and this will determine the curriculum offer he receives, the peer group he interacts with and the opportunities available.

If no place this academic year he will go to a post-16 college and study ESOL.

Will this be a quality education as defined in SD4?



How can we enable Hassan to emerge from his schooling as intelligent, imaginative, and linguistically talented?

# THREE OTHER STORIES...OR THEIR STORIES SO FAR

'I don't want to miss too many years out of my life'

'A 14 year old school boy is not like you. They are naughty. You are too quiet.'

'This is not my dream. I will end up on benefits. This is not the life I want.'

Aman



Junaid



'I felt like I am less than them'

Allan



'a month waiting is like a year'

'the hardest bit is now'

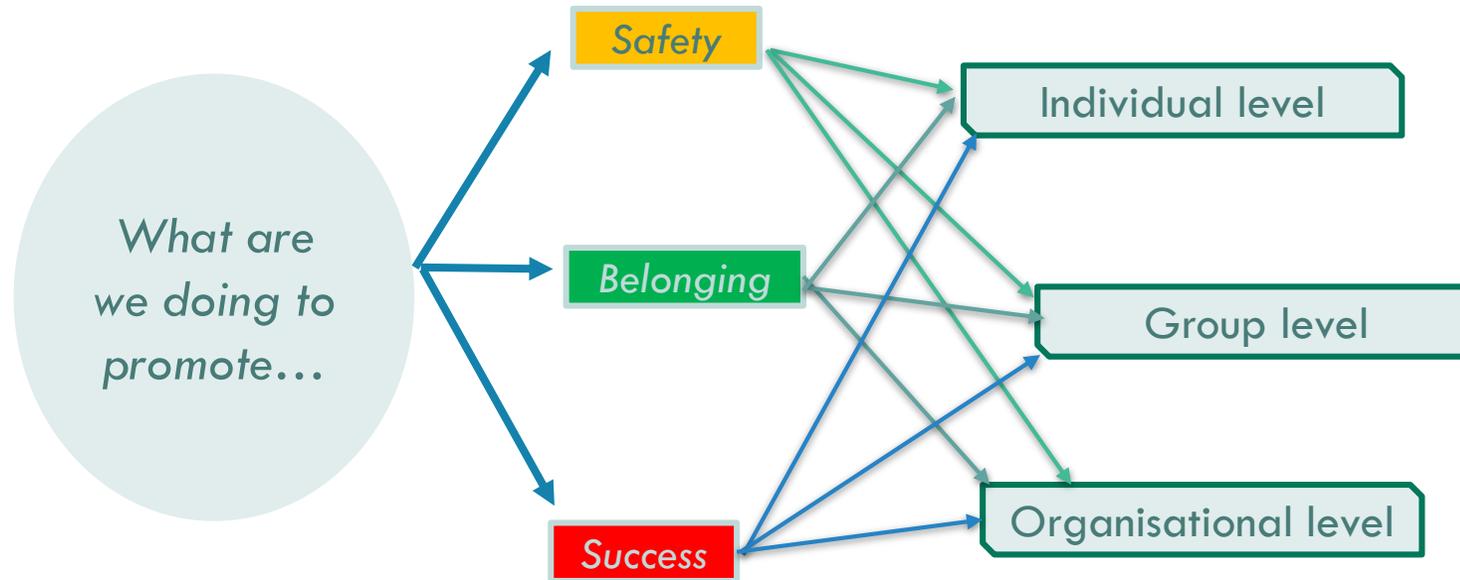
# WHAT HAVE WE LEARNT FROM THE LUND - NOTTINGHAM PROJECT

- Bilingualism and the importance of valuing and maintaining the first language rather than replacing it
- Social and peer interaction
- Holistic assessment of what they can already do and bring to the classroom
- Not treating new arrivals as a homogeneous group

An asset-based approach. A socially just pedagogy.



# USING THE CONCEPTS TO QUESTION POLICY AND OUR OWN PRACTICE



### 3. HOW CAN WORKING WITH BEGINNING TEACHERS IN THIS WAY SHAPE FUTURE EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND PRACTICE FOR REFUGEE PUPILS?

If we want Hassan (and Zosia, Aman, Junaid, Raoul, Mohammed, Ayisha, Eva, Michal, Ania, Kanta, Ola, Hussain, Alan... ) to emerge from schooling as intelligent, imaginative, and linguistically talented, then...



**treat them as intelligent, imaginative, and linguistically talented from the first day they arrive in school. (Cummins 2015)**

Supporting new arrivals through an asset-based approach

# BY REMINDING THEM THAT THEY HAVE AGENCY AND CAN BE A FORCE FOR POSITIVE CHANGE

- You are a global teacher
- You are a local teacher
- You are an individual teacher (your classroom is a space where change can happen)

And the suggested socially just asset-based approach will benefit all new arrivals...  
and be closer to a quality education for all..

‘non-immigrant pupils do better as a result of having immigrant peers’ (Michael Wilshaw, former chief inspector of schools)



## **A NEST WELCOME**

Music playing, voices of birds,  
Different languages, different words,  
“Welcome, welcome to NEST!”

Beautiful smiles on faces  
Teachers and students, we are like a family,  
Friendship and loyalty,  
“Welcome, welcome to NEST!”

Go up step by step to my goal,  
We listen to cool music, play pool,  
We see green plants,  
We all grow together,  
And we learn grammar....  
“Welcome, welcome to NEST!”

I can prepare for my future,  
I will never find another place like here,  
“Welcome, welcome to NEST!”



**McIntyre, J., Neuhaus, S., and Blennow, K. 2018. Participatory parity in schooling and moves towards ordinariness: a comparison of refugee education policy and practice in England and Sweden, *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*.**

**McIntyre, J. & Hall, C. 2018. Barriers to the inclusion of refugee and asylum-seeking children in schools in England, *Educational Review***

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