

# THE STAGING POST

A film by Jolyon Hoff



LS LIGHT SOUND  
AF ART FILM

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A **STUDY GUIDE** BY KATY MARRINER



<http://www.metromagazine.com.au>

ISBN: 978-1-76061-065-4

<http://theeducationshop.com.au>



Run time:  
58 mins

## THE STAGING POST

When the Australian Government stopped the boats coming from Indonesia, filmmaker Jolyon Hoff drove to the refugee boats' staging post in Indonesia to 'meet the refugees'. Unsure of what he would find, Hoff discovered photographers, filmmakers, musicians, artists, teachers and families. *The Staging Post* (2017) produced and directed by Hoff is about the people he met and the community they built together.

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## » INTRODUCING THE STAGING POST

Refugees have been the major story in Australia since the Tampa incident in 2001. The on again, off again, 'turn-back' policy has many admirers, and many detractors. At the centre of this political storm are the refugees themselves. In 2013, when Australia re-instigated the policy, filmmaker Jolyon Hoff drove up the hill from Jakarta to the boats' staging post in Cisarua, Indonesia. He wanted to find out who the refugees were and, with the boats stopped, what they planned to do now. Almost immediately he met Muzafar Ali and Khadim Dai.

Muzafar is a photographer and human rights activist who had worked for the UN in Afghanistan. His stunning photographs showed the Hazara people and their lands in central Afghanistan. Seventeen-year-old Khadim, left Quetta, Pakistan when his school was bombed, killing 126 people, including his best friend. He was standing beside their mass grave when a voice pounded in his head 'I have to raise my voice, I have to raise my people's voice, I have to raise my voice'. In Indonesia, Khadim had been using his mobile phone to film intimate and compelling footage of life as a refugee.

At their first meeting Jolyon, Muzafar and Khadim decided to start a project together. The three of them made a series of films, which were watched tens of thousands of times. Khadim won an award in New York, and through their films and photographs they started to give voice to a forgotten community.

When Muzafar and Khadim told Jolyon they wanted to start a school, he agreed to support it. A few months later,



he was on a surfing holiday in Bali with his family when they rang to say they had found a space. Jolyon and his wife agreed to go ahead and, a week later, he was still in Bali when Muzafar and Khadim called again – they had fifty students and five teachers.

One of those teachers was Tahira. She had travelled from Afghanistan to Indonesia with her two children to find her husband. The last time she had heard from him, he was about to catch a boat to Australia. She had been living in Jakarta when she heard about the school and she immediately moved nearby, volunteering as a teacher.

Soon the school grew too big and Muzafar and Khadim found another building. This one was perfect and even had a yard for the children to play. The cost had also increased dramatically but, impressed by the progress of the refugees, Jolyon and Caroline set about building the coalition of Australian supporters to fund the new space.



The rest of the refugee community in Indonesia watched the success of the Cisarua Refugee Learning Centre. Inspired, there are now four other schools, a Karate club, a women’s handicraft group and many other refugee-led initiatives in Cisarua.

Muzafar has now resettled with his family in Adelaide and works for the non-profit organization that supports the school. Khadim was denied a humanitarian visa to Australia and was resettled in the US. He is currently living in Los Angeles. Through his filmmaking, he has met with CEOs, Oscar-winning filmmakers and famous actors. He is currently making a film about LGBTI refugees living in America and is studying at film school. Jolyon still can’t believe that one small trip would change his life forever.

\*See Appendix 1: Director’s statement

#### OFFICIAL LINKS

The Staging Post website

<https://www.thestagingpost.com.au/>

The Staging Post | Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/thestagingpostfilm/>

The Staging Post | Instagram

<https://www.instagram.com/thestagingpost/>



The refugees were buoyed by their achievements. They could not work, had little money, and were stuck in a years-long and uncertain ‘queue’ at the UNHCR. Still, each day they laughed as they went to the school – proud and happy. Parents would drop their kids every morning. Fathers would clean the school; mothers would pack lunches. The women even started playing soccer, something not possible in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The energy of the entire community changed.

With many Australians increasingly frustrated by the situation in Manus and Nauru, support for the school was easy to find. Hundreds of individuals, as well as institutions including Australian Education Union, NSW Teacher Federation, Australian International School, Indonesia and the Refugee Council of Australia, helped a fundraising campaign in 2015. The campaign was oversubscribed by ten thousand dollars.

The school now has nearly 200 students and fifteen teachers and managers – all refugees. In addition, in the afternoons it runs women’s classes and online classes for older students. The online classes are supported via Skype by Australian teachers. There are constant visitors and interns from Australia and the education is a two-way process. The refugees invite the visitors into their houses and feed them traditional Hazara foods, allowing them to interact in a personal and meaningful way.





## » CURRICULUM LINKS

*The Staging Post* provides a better understanding of the experiences and challenges faced by people who are forced to leave their homes in search of asylum and refuge. The documentary provides opportunities for students to discuss:

- the key concepts and facts about refugees and asylum seekers;
- the human rights issues faced by asylum seekers and refugees;
- the courage, hope, dignity and resilience of asylum seekers and refugees in the face of profound hardships;

This study guide to accompany *The Staging Post* has been written for secondary students at all year levels. For Years 7 – 10 it provides information and suggestions for learning activities in Civics and Citizenship, English, Geography, History, Media and curriculum projects discussing the issue of asylum seekers and refugees. *The Staging Post* can also be used as a resource to address the Australian Curriculum general capabilities Ethical Understanding and Intercultural Understanding and the cross curriculum priority Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia. For Years 11 and 12 it provides information and suggestions for learning in Australian History, English, Geography, Global Politics and Media Arts.

Teachers are advised to consult the Australian Curriculum online at <http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/> and curriculum outlines relevant to their state or territory for further information. For more information about curriculum applicability see Appendix 2: Curriculum links.

The study guide is structured as a series of discussions about the ideas and issues raised by the documentary's story. Teachers may select from the information and activities to support students' viewing and close analysis of the documentary. This study guide's key objective is to provide a framework for positive discussion about the experiences of people who are seeking asylum and the issues raised by their stories. The activities challenge students to think about asylum seekers and refugees in a compassionate way and allow students to engage in important conversations about Australia's response to asylum seekers and refugees. Having viewed and analysed *The Staging Post*, it is hoped that students will be inspired to initiate social justice projects that support the needs of and foster respectful attitudes towards asylum seekers and refugees.

## + Key knowledge

**This knowledge includes an understanding of:**

- the text including events, characters, settings, ideas, issues and themes;
- the ways filmmakers create meaning and build the world of the text;
- the political, social and cultural forces that shape our world;
- contemporary global issues and how people can participate as active and informed global citizens;
- the notion of a common humanity, in which there are shared responsibilities and rights that transcend national boundaries.

## + Key skills

**These skills include the ability to:**

- identify, explain and analyse events, characters, settings, ideas, issues and themes presented in texts;
- identify, explain and analyse how texts are created in and for different contexts, audiences and purposes, and the choices made by filmmakers to meet these;
- research, organise and analyse information and evidence to identify key points, points of view, perceptions and interpretations;
- present findings in appropriate forms for different audiences and purposes.

Teachers are advised to preview *The Staging Post* prior to classroom viewing.

Given the personal and also political dimensions of the content of *The Staging Post*, teachers are advised to establish clear expectations about student participation in activities. Students should be reminded to listen respectfully to the views of others and to express their own opinions in a thoughtful and considerate way. For students, particularly those with refugee backgrounds, viewing *The Staging Post* and discussing its ideas and issues may prove challenging. Teachers need to respect the circumstances of these students and remain aware of their sensitivities. These students may be willing to share their experiences with the class. If this is the case, teachers should moderate the discussion.





## » CISARUA REFUGEE LEARNING CENTRE

The Cisarua Refugee Learning Centre (CRLC) is a refugee established and managed school located just outside of Jakarta, Indonesia. It has been operating since August 2014 and now has six classrooms, twelve teachers, six administration staff and nearly 200 students – all refugees.

In the afternoons the school offers basic English classes to women, many of whom are illiterate even in their native language. The CRLC also provides extra curriculum activities like football and excursions for the students.

Since starting it has attracted support from Australia and around the world. The school is regularly visited by Australian University students, academics, teachers, artists, authors, filmmakers, journalists and other interested individuals.

CRLC is supported by the Australian non-profit Cisarua Learning Inc.

### OFFICIAL LINKS

<http://cisarualearning.com/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/cisarua-refugee-learning-centre/>  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpd8DG0cD6VpD9jX-4wjpXg>

### RECOMMENDED LINKS

<http://theconversation.com/refugee-run-school-in-indonesia-a-model-for-governments-to-emulate-55378>  
<http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/earshot/cisarua/7371670>  
<http://www.australiaplus.com/international/explore-and-experience/the-right-to-education:-refugees-running-their-own-school-in-in/8624922>  
<http://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-asia-35965610/indonesia-learning-centre-offers-hope-to-refugee-children>  
<https://medium.com/@NexusArts/who-are-we-anyway-4106fcf184e2>  
<http://www.smh.com.au/world/learning-centre-helps- asylum-seekers-cope-20141003-10ppkx.html>  
<http://www.swinburne.edu.au/news/latest-news/2016/03/refugee-run-school-in-indonesia-a-model-for-governments-to-emulate.php>





## PARTICIPANTS

**MUZAFAR ALI** was born in Afghanistan and grew up in Pakistan before returning to Afghanistan to work for the United Nations (UN). Travelling for the UN around Afghanistan he bought a camera and documented the situation of his people, the Hazara. After being threatened by the Taliban, he escaped to Indonesia where he was the instigator of the Cisarua Refugee Learning Centre (CRLC). He has recently resettled with his family in Adelaide, Australia, where he continues to support the CRLC.

**KHADIM DAI** was seventeen-years-old when a bomb killed 126 people and destroyed his school in Quetta, Pakistan. He smuggled himself to Indonesia where four times he tried to catch a boat to Australia. On the last attempt, his sister rang him and told him Australia had changed the laws and he would be stranded on a remote island. Khadim is a co-founder of the Cisarua Refugee Learning Centre. The films he has made on his mobile phone have won awards internationally. He is now living in Los Angeles and speaking at schools and universities to promote CRLC.

**JOLYON HOFF** is an Australian filmmaker who has worked in Washington DC, Nigeria, Indonesia and West Africa. His films explore themes of identity, place and belonging, and the role of heroes, rituals and story in binding these communities together. The subjects of his films have included a schizophrenic Australian surfing icon; an eccentric football fan; American computer gaming programmers; tsunami survivors in Aceh, Indonesia; Afghan Hazara Refugees in Indonesia; and traditional Kings, Chiefs and Yoruba ritual in Nigeria.

<http://www.jolyonhoff.com/>  
<http://jolyonhoff-blog.tumblr.com/>  
<https://twitter.com/jolyonhoff>

## » RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Muzafar Ali and Khadim Dai have featured in Australian feature documentary *Chasing Asylum*, appeared on SBS's *Insight* and helped the team of SBS's *Go Back To Where You Come From* find their way around Cisarua. Further information about Muzafar and Khadim can be accessed via the following links.

Muzafar Ali: Muzafar Ali | Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/amuzafar>

'A profile of Hazara photographer. Muzafar Ali'

<https://vimeo.com/94909316>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mq8T5wbl-g0>

National Geographic: Your Shot

<http://yourshot.nationalgeographic.com/profile/513577/>

Khadim Dai: Khadim Dai | Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/khadim.dai>

'Life as a Hazara refugee'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apdMkYET86c>

'Frontiers of Hope' – *Sydney Morning Herald*

<http://www.smh.com.au/interactive/2015/frontiers-of-hope/indonesia/>

'We invited an asylum seeker to a Q&A session on Facebook. This is what happened next...'

– *Sydney Morning Herald*

<http://www.smh.com.au/world/how-our-qa-session-with-a-refugee-highlighted-the-poisonous-state-of-debate-in-australia-20150818-gj1xuw.html>



# GLOSSARY

The following terms are used in *The Staging Post* and this study guide. Teachers may choose to provide students with this glossary or ask them to make their own glossary (see Appendix 3: Glossary)

## **1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees:**

The 1951 Refugee Convention, is a United Nations treaty that defines who is a refugee, and sets out the rights of individuals who are granted asylum and the responsibilities of nations that grant asylum.

**Asylum seeker:** someone who has fled from his or her country and is seeking refugee status in another country.

**Destination country:** the country where a refugee is resettled.

**Displaced person:** a person who is forced to leave their home country.

**Hazaras:** a Persian-speaking people who mainly live in central Afghanistan, Hazara Town in Balochistan, Pakistan, and Karachi.

**Illegal maritime arrival:** or unauthorised maritime arrival is a person who arrives in a country by boat and does not have a visa to enter the country.

**Immigration detention:** the government practice of detaining refugees, asylum-seekers and other migrants for administrative purposes; typically to establish their identity, facilitate an immigration or other protection claim, or to arrange their removal from the country.

**Mandatory detention:** a policy that requires all unlawful non-citizens to be detained until they are granted a visa or leave Australia.

**Offshore processing:** the practice of sending people seeking asylum by boat to offshore locations where they are detained while their refugee claims are determined.

**Operation Sovereign Borders:** a border protection operation led by the Australian Defence Force.

**People smuggling:** the facilitation, transportation, attempted transportation or illegal entry of a person or persons across an international border.

**Refugee:** a person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.

**Source country:** the country that an asylum seeker or refugee leaves because of persecution.

**Taliban:** a Muslim fundamentalist group in Afghanistan.

**Transit country:** a country which an asylum seeker or refugee travels through to access protection.

**Turnbacks:** the terms 'turnbacks', 'take-backs', 'turnarounds' or 'pushbacks' are often used interchangeably to refer to the turning back of asylum seeker boats.

**United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees:** (UNHCR): an organisation that leads and coordinates international action to protect refugees across the world.

**Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948:** an international document that states basic rights and fundamental freedoms to which all human beings are entitled.

**Visa:** an endorsement on a passport indicating that the holder is allowed to enter, leave, or stay for a specified period of time in a country.



## 1. TURN BACK THE BOATS

- 'Between 2008 and 2013, 51, 798 asylum seekers arrived in Australia by boat.' – *The Staging Post*  
Why do you think *The Staging Post* begins with this statistic?

'Boat arrivals and boat 'turnbacks' in Australia since 1976: a quick guide to the statistics' can be accessed on the Parliament of Australia website using the following link:

[http://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/pubs/rp/rp1617/Quick\\_Guides/BoatTurnbacks](http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1617/Quick_Guides/BoatTurnbacks)

The quick guide provides statistics on the number of asylum seeker boats that have arrived in Australia since 1976.

The full research paper includes an overview of the historical and political context surrounding the arrival of asylum seekers by boat, details of Australian Government policy responses since 1976, and trends in public opinion. Access the full research paper online at [http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/library/prspub/5P1X6/upload\\_binary/5P1X6.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf#search=%22library/prspub/5P1X6%22](http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/library/prspub/5P1X6/upload_binary/5P1X6.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf#search=%22library/prspub/5P1X6%22).

- In 1976, boats carrying people seeking asylum from the aftermath of the Vietnam War began to arrive. Look at Table 1: Boat arrivals since 1976 by calendar year
  - How many people seeking asylum arrived in Australia by boat from 1976 to 1981?
  - What federal government(s) were in power during this period?
  - What were the federal government policies regarding asylum seekers during this period?
- From 1999 to 2001 there was a significant increase

in the number of people seeking asylum in Australia.

- How many people seeking asylum arrived in Australia by boat from 1999 to 2001?
- Why was there an increase in the number of people seeking asylum in Australia during this period?
- What federal government(s) were in power during this period?
- What were the federal government policies regarding asylum seekers during this period?

The quick guide also includes the number of boats that been 'turned back' since the practice of removing unauthorised maritime arrivals in Suspected Illegal Entry Vessels (SIEVs) from Australian waters was introduced by the Howard Government (from 2001–2003) and reintroduced by the Abbott Government (in 2013).

- Look at Table 3: Boat 'turnbacks' 2001 – 2003.
  - According to Table 3: Boat 'turnbacks' 2001 – 2003, how many people were prevented from seeking asylum in Australia from 2001 to 2003?
  - The Howard Federal Government was in power during this period. What was the Government's policy on asylum seekers? Why did the Government introduce a 'turnback' policy? Was there any opposition to this policy? What were the impacts of this policy?
- 'On the 19th of July 2013, the Australian Government instigated mandatory detention for all asylum seekers arriving by boat, with no possibility for resettlement in Australia.' – *The Staging Post*

Look at Table 4: Boat 'turnbacks' since 2013.

- According to Table 4: Boat 'turnbacks' since 2013, how many people were prevented from seeking asylum in Australia from 2013 to August 2016?
- Why did the Abbott Federal Government reintroduce a 'turnback' policy? Who challenged this policy decision? Why?
- Operation Sovereign Borders (OSB), established by the Abbott Government in 2013, defines 'turnbacks' as 'the safe removal of vessels from Australian waters, with passengers and crew returned to their countries of departure'; and 'take-backs' as a transfer (often at sea) of passengers from one sovereign authority to another 'where Australia works with a country of departure in order to see the safe return of passengers and crew'.

How has OSB impacted on the number of people seeking asylum in Australia?

What impacts did the Gillard Federal Government decision of 2012 regarding offshore processing and the Rudd Federal Government's decision of 2013 regarding offshore processing and resettlement have on people seeking asylum in Australia?

- The Abbott Federal Government became the Turnbull Federal Government in September 2015 when Malcolm Turnbull defeated Abbott in a





leadership challenge. What is the Turnbull Federal Government's policy on asylum seekers?

- Use online resources to determine the answers to the following questions:
  - How many refugees did Australia accept from 2008 to 2013?
  - How many refugees has Australia accepted since 2013?

In *The Staging Post*, Khadim Ali, one of the documentary's protagonists speaks of his attempts to leave Indonesia and seek asylum in Australia, 'Four times, four times I tried to get a boat and go to Australia but each time I fail.'

- *Watch from 00:37:35:09 to 00:38:54:08.* What does Khadim's recollection of his fourth attempt to leave Indonesia for Australia reveal about the risks that asylum seekers are willing to take? What risk was Khadim not willing to take? What comment does this footage make about Australia's response to asylum seekers?

## ► Investigation D: Global citizenship

### What is global citizenship?

Global citizenship involves knowing that we are all citizens of the one globe and behaving in a way which demonstrates a respect for that globe and all people on it.

A global citizen is someone who demonstrates the following values and attitudes:

- Empathy
- A commitment to social justice and equity
- A respect for diversity
- A concern for the environment and a commitment to sustainable development
- A belief that people can make a difference

The focus of this investigation is to determine Australia's demonstration of global citizenship by examining Australia's current response to asylum seekers and refugees. This investigation consists of collaborative and individual tasks.

### The investigation has four parts:

- a. Identify the current Australian Federal Government's response to asylum seekers and refugees. Is the current Australian Federal Government's response to asylum seekers and refugees a positive example of global citizenship? Compile a written report that provides a detailed account of the findings of your investigation.
- b. Identify the response of an Australian non-government organisation (NGO) to asylum seekers and refugees. How is the work of the NGO promoting global citizenship? Make an A3 poster to raise awareness about the NGO that you have investigated.
- c. Identify an individual who is making a positive contribution to the situation of asylum seekers and refugees. This individual may be employed by the Australian Federal Government or work for an NGO. You could also choose an individual who is regarded as an advocate for asylum seekers and refugees or an individual who works for a media outlet. The individual may be someone you know who has an active involvement in the campaign to seek justice for asylum seekers or refugees. Write and present a speech commending this individual's demonstration of global citizenship.
- d. Do you think your response to asylum seekers and refugees demonstrates global citizenship? Write a personal reflection in answer to this question.

## 2. CISARUA, INDONESIA

The town of Cisarua is located in West Java, Indonesia. It is known for its mountainous landscape, mild temperatures and colonial heritage.

- Use Google Maps to locate Cisarua. Describe Cisarua's location. How far is Cisarua from Australia?

Cisarua is a staging post for people seeking asylum. A staging post is a place at which people, vehicles, or aircraft regularly stop when making a particular journey.

Recommended teacher resource: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/gallery/2014/jul/21/life-in-limbo-the-asylum-seekers-stranded-in-cisarua-indonesia>

- One reason to explain Cisarua's sizeable population of asylum seekers and refugees is because of its proximity to the UNHCR offices in the capital Jakarta. Jakarta is located 72 kilometres north of Cisarua. What other reasons can you provide to explain this population demographic?
- How does *The Staging Post* portray Cisarua?

Indonesia is not a signatory to the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*; nor is there domestic law in place to protect refugees. As a non-signatory to the *Convention*, Indonesia does not conduct refugee assessments, nor offer any pathways for refugees to attain permanent residency there.

Indonesia is a transit country. Asylum seekers and refugees intend to stay in Indonesia for a short time before travelling to Australia. Refugees and asylum seekers arrive in Indonesia either by plane (for those with travel documents and access to a visa) or by boat, most commonly via Malaysia. Asylum seekers pay people smugglers to facilitate their journey to Indonesia. For example: an asylum seeker will fly to Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia, and then travel on fishing boats to North Sumatra in Indonesia by crossing the Strait of Malacca. The smugglers pay bribes to Malaysian and Indonesian authorities to give their passengers a safe passage through airports and other checkpoints.

Recommended teacher resource: BRISKMAN, Linda Ruth; FISKE, Lucy Imogen. Asylum seekers and refugees in Indonesia: Problems and potentials. *Cosmopolitan Civil Societies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, [S.l.], v.8, n.2, p.22-42, July 2016. ISSN 1837-5391. Available at: <http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/journals/index.php/mcs/article/view/4883/5490>.

This paper outlines the main political and policy frameworks affecting the lives of refugees in Indonesia and then draws on research interviews and participant observation to illustrate the resilience and agency utilised by the community to mitigate uncertain futures. The major focus is on education for asylum seeker/refugee children.

Muzafar Ali is cited as the independent researcher. The paper provides information about the community of refugees living in Cisarua and the establishment of the CRLC.

- Why is Indonesia a transit destination for asylum seekers?



## 3. WHO ARE THEY ANYWAY?

'When Australia stopped the boats I wanted to know more. I was living in Jakarta, so I drove up to Cisarua, the staging post for boats that were going to Christmas Island. I wanted to meet the refugees. I wanted to know who were they. Where did they come from and what were they going to do now.' – Jolyon Hoff

- Who is an asylum seeker?
- Who is a refugee?
- What is the difference between an asylum seeker and a refugee?

Recommended resource: 'Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees' available at <http://www.unhcr.org/protect/PROTECTION/3b66c2aa10.pdf>.

In Cisarua, Jolyon met and made friends with filmmaker Khadim Dai and photographer Muzafar Ali. Together they have documented the stories of the asylum seekers living in Cisarua.

- *Watch from 00:00:58:17 to 00:06:50:19.*  
How are Khadim and Muzafar introduced to the audience of *The Staging Post*?  
What does the audience learn about their lives in Cisarua?  
What does the audience learn about the lives in their home countries and the reasons for seeking asylum outside of their home countries?
- The reasons influencing migration are labelled as 'push' and 'pull' factors. 'Push' factors are conditions that drive people to leave their country. 'Pull' factors are conditions that attract people to a new country. Spend time as a class listing examples of push and pull factors.  
How do push and pull factors influence the movement of asylum seekers and refugees from source countries to transit countries and destination countries?

Jolyon explains that there are approximately 5000 refugees in Cisarua. They arrive as asylum seekers and while they can stay, they are not permitted to work or study. They register with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to be officially acknowledged as having refugee status. Refugees are issued documentation by the UNHCR that identifies them as asylum seekers and offers them protection against possible deportation. Registration also begins the Refugee Status Determination process. It can take 18 months from registration to first interview. If they are recognised as having refugee status they hope to be resettled in a third country such as Australia. This can take up to ten years.

- ‘They decide if you’re genuine refugees or not.’ – Khadim  
What is the UNHCR?  
What role does UNHCR in protecting refugees?  
How does *The Staging Post* portray UNHCR?
- *Watch from 00:06:52:14 to 00:07:43:00.*  
This clip documents a trip from Cisarua to the UNHCR office in Jakarta.  
What statement does this footage make about the bureaucratic challenge of being recognised as a refugee by UNHCR?  
Pause the clip at 00:07:36:03. Explain the symbolism conveyed by the image of the UNHCR signage.

Jolyon acknowledges the hardships and uncertainty of the Refugee Status Determination process:

‘To get to Indonesia the refugees sold everything they had and they rely on support from family and friends to survive. It costs about \$80 a month. If they run out of money, they’re forced to go to Indonesian detention camps where conditions are appalling. And once in the camps, there’s no way out till they’re resettled. The endless waiting and they’re unknown future creates a huge mental challenge for the refugees.’

- Information about Immigration Detention in Indonesia can be accessed via the Global Detention Project website at <https://www.globaldetentionproject.org/countries/asia-pacific/indonesia>.



## 4. HAZARAS

‘Most of these people are Hazara. Hazara is an ethnic. Mostly they’re living in Afghanistan and Central Afghanistan. Some of them are from Pakistan. They face persecution. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, they’re killed by the religious extremists.’ – Muzafar

A large percentage of refugees in Indonesia are ethnically Hazara. They are physically distinct from other ethnic groups in both Afghanistan and Pakistan as Muzafar acknowledges, and are readily identifiable.

The Hazara ethnic minority lives in Afghanistan, making up around nine percent of the country’s population. There are also communities living in Iran and Pakistan. Hazaras are Shiite rather than Sunni Muslim.

- Why are Hazaras subject to persecution in their home countries of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran?  
Research the history of Hazara persecution using online resources.

Working in a small group of students, make a Google Slides presentation that provides a historical overview of Hazara persecution.

*The Staging Post* features footage of a candle lit vigil. A group of Hazaras living in Cisarua spell out the message 'I AM HAZARA' using small white candles. Some of them hold hand made signs that say 'I AM HAZARA / WE WANT PEACE' and 'WE NEED PEACE'

- Explain the significance of the vigil and the statement written in candles – 'I am Hazara'.

Khadim's flatmate Baz Muhammad is finally recognised as a refugee by UNHCR. Khadim reflects on the situation,

'After nine months he was given his refugee status but he does not look any happier. When I ask him he said he was a refugee since the day he left home and the piece of paper does not make any difference to that.'

- *Watch from 00:17:04:00 to 00:18:56:08.*  
Explain the significance of Baz Muhammad's comment about being 'officially' recognised as a refugee. Khadim and his friends celebrate. Describe the celebration. What does the celebration reveal about the lives of the refugees living in Cisarua? How does the news of an explosion in Hazara Town Quetta impact on the celebration?



## 5. STARTING THE SCHOOL

The idea of a school is proposed at a community gathering to mark Eid. Eid is a religious holiday to celebrate the breaking of the fast.

- *Watch from 00:09:40:05 to 00:11:18:00.*  
Muzafar speaks to the assembled crowd:  
'Today, on this festive day, let's not forget the victims of Dai Kundi, Ghor and Quetta. We experienced those atrocities and that's why we are here as refugees. This is not like the old times, when refugees stayed here for two, three or five months. Every one of you knows that there is a possibility that we remain here indefinitely. If so, we need a community. We need support; each other's support. We have all kind of people that a society needs. We have teachers, labourers, engineers and doctors. One of our problems is school. We can make our own school. We have teachers and we have students. I have only one more thing to say, courageous people never give up.'  
What is Muzafar referring to when he acknowledges the



‘atrocities’ and ‘victims’ of Dai Kundi, Ghor and Quetta? Muzafar proposes that the refugees living in Cisarua become a community.

What is a community? What are the characteristics of a community?

An individual can belong to several different communities at the same time.

What communities do you belong to? What do you think are the benefits of belonging to a community?

Why does Muzafar believe that the refugees should build a community in Cisarua?

Why do you think it is the issue of education that unites the refugees as a community?

Recommended reading: Lucy Fiske, ‘Refugee Transit in Indonesia: The Critical Importance of Community’, IPI Global Observatory, 8 March 2017. <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2017/03/indonesia-refugee-crisis-unhcr/>

Meetings are held to discuss how to provide the refugee children living in Cisarua with access to education. Muzafar believes,

‘Having access to education is a universal human right. Even those in prison have this right. No one can stop us getting education. Our children do not go to school, only because we are refugees and asylum seekers.’

But as Jolyon explains,

‘The UNHCR in Jakarta had told the refugees not to engage in any organised activities. So to start the school they would put at risk the only thing that they had left their hope to be resettled in a third country.’

- Even though establishing a school is forbidden, the refugees continue with their plan. Drawing on *The Staging Post*, provide examples of the support for the school. Why does this support exist? What does the footage of the students suggest about the importance of the school?

Lucy Hamilton and her son are the first visitors to the Cisarua Refugee Learning Centre (CRLC). They arrive with fifty kilograms of books. It is the school’s first gift from Australia.

- Lucy: They’ve come from such difficult circumstances and they’re still waiting for a future, so to have this school it makes me so happy to see ... it is hope. Explain the significance of the gift. What does it mean to Lucy and her son? What does it mean to the staff and students at CRLC?



## 6. A VISIT TO THE AIS JAKARTA

A few weeks after CRLC opens, the students are invited to the Australia International School (AIS) in Jakarta. They are asked to represent Afghanistan during International Week. For most of the students at CRLC it will be the first time they have met people who are not refugees. Muzafar describes the invitation as an opportunity for the refugee community in Cisarua to present themselves and their country in a positive way rather than as people who are suffering and without hope.

- How does the footage convey what this invitation means to the refugee community living in Cisarua?
- 'We thought that we are forgotten people but when we visited that school they were laughing with us, they were sharing meal with us and they were talking with us and we thought that we are also human being. We are also valuable people and we can teach someone who we are and we can tell them our stories and we can let them know what happened to us and why we came to Indonesia – why we fled from our country.' – Muzafar

*Watch from 00:20:46:00 to 00:23:52:00.*

What comment does this clip make about the value of the CRLC in the lives of the refugee community of Cisarua?

What can be learnt from the interactions of the students and staff from CRLC and AIS?

Why is this event important?

- To learn more about AIS, visit the school online at <http://www.ais-indonesia.com/>.



## 7. THE SCHOOL EXPANDS

'When we started this learning centre or this school we identified some very serious problems like the students came from Iran, from Iraq, Pakistan, Afghanistan. All of them studied in different curriculum schools, different systems, and we had only two rooms, how can we adjust fifty students in two rooms...' – Muzafar

To meet the needs of the students, the CRLC decides to expand into a nearby property. Jolyon and his wife Caroline sign the lease on behalf of the community because asylum seekers and refugees do not have any legal rights in transit countries like Indonesia.

- *Watch from 00:26:34:03 to 00:29:49:00.*

Write a detailed analysis of this clip.

Commenting on both story and production elements, explain how the clip adds to the audience's understanding of:

- Muzafar's leadership;
- the skills of the refugees;
- the resourcefulness and resilience of the community;
- the importance of the school to the children of Cisarua.

- 'The fear factor has gone within the families, within the children.' – Muzafar

*Watch from 00:38:55:16 to 00:40:57:11.*





As a community celebration plays out in the background, Muzafar speaks of the way that fear shapes the lives of asylum seekers and refugees. He acknowledges that the school played an instrumental role in dispelling the fears of the refugees living in Cisarua. What impact did rumours about UNHCR surveillance have on the day to day lives of the refugees living in Cisarua?

What comment does the footage make about the need to move beyond fear?

Why does Muzafar say that good has won over bad?

- Khadim reflects on what the CRLC has achieved, particularly in terms of dispelling fears of others about refugees,

‘Refugees are not just boat people or criminal or terrorist...They are very wonderful people, skilful people.’

*Watch from 41:07:07 to 00:43:30:00*

What has Khadim gained from his association with CRLC?

What does this footage suggest about the impact of CRLC in changing people’s perceptions of asylum seekers and refugees?

The Cisarua Refugee Learning Centre has nearly 200 students and there are now seven refugee schools in Indonesia. UNHCR has reversed their advice and now encourage refugees to engage in positive activities.

- Why does CRLC deserve to be described as ‘inspiring’?

## 8. TAHIRA’S STORY

Tahira Razai is a teacher at CRLC. She is from Pakistan. She is married with two children. Her husband is missing.

- *Watch from 00:29:53:00 to 00:33:32:10.*  
Why did Tahira come to Indonesia?  
Explain Tahira’s decision to teach at CRLC. What has she gained from her involvement in CRLC?  
What does Tahira’s story reveal about the importance of hope?

## 9. HAZARA WOMEN

In *The Staging Post* both Khadim and Muzafar reflect on the changed status of women in Cisarua. Khadim had never even seen a woman kick a ball, let alone play in a football match or help build a community. He is grateful for their contributions. Muzafar also speaks positively about the role of women in the Cisarua community and the equal nature of relationships between genders.

Khadim’s film about Hazara women is titled ‘The Heart of Our Community’. *Watch from 00:33:55:00 to 00:35:09:18.*



- 'I wanted to make this short film to recognise the refugee women here. I think sometimes people see the hijab and think that they are oppressed or downtrodden. Sure they dress more conservatively than Western women but as refugees we are all experimenting with new ways of life and the women are embracing this change more than anyone.' – Khadim

Write a detailed analysis of this clip.

Commenting on both story and production elements, explain how the clip adds to the audience's understanding of:

- the status of Hazara women;
- the importance of the school to the women of Cisarua;
- the contribution of women to the refugee community of Cisarua.

- *Watch from 35:33:14 to 00:37:34:15.*

'They experienced bomb blasts. They experienced Taliban massacres. When they fled from Afghanistan or Pakistan on the way they were robbed, exploited by smugglers, police officers extorted money from them and when they came here, they're living also in fear. This time they're living in fear of UNHCR.' – Muzafar

What does this clip reveal about the challenges that the women refugees have faced as individuals?

What does Muzafar acknowledge about the status and strengths of women in the refugee community of Cisarua?

What comment does the footage of the football match make about community?

## 10. SAYING GOODBYE

Muzafar and his family are given visas to resettle in Australia. One year later, Khadim is given a visa to resettle in the United States.

- *Watch from 43:35:10 to 49:52:20.*

What are Muzafar's hopes for the future?

What do Muzafar's comments in this clip suggest about his sense of himself as a global citizen?

How does this clip convey the joy that follows Muzafar's good news?

How does this clip convey the challenges that come with leaving Cisarua?

What challenges do you think Muzafar and his family will face during their resettlement?

- 'I was just here to learn.'

*Watch from 51:04:10 to 57:01:14.*

Write a detailed analysis of this clip.

Commenting on both story and production elements, explain how the clip adds to the audience's understanding of:

- Khadim;
- Khadim's connection to his family and his past in Pakistan;
- Khadim's connection to the refugee community of Cisarua;
- Khadim's hopes for the future;
- Khadim's decision to keep the Australian Federal Government's 'No Way' pamphlet

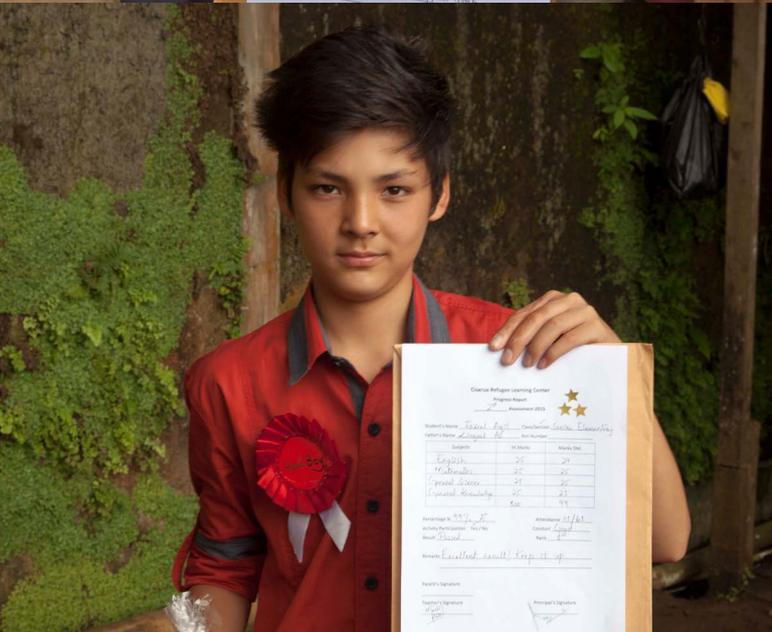
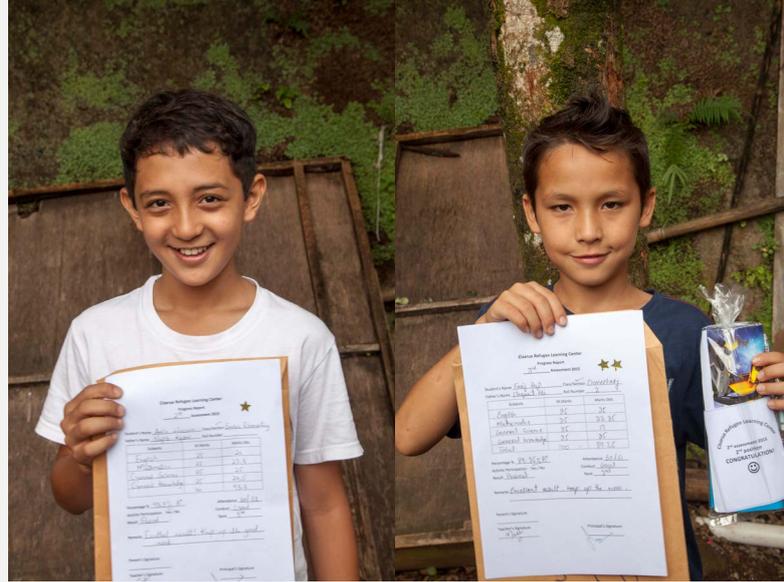


## » POSTSCRIPT

**MUZAFAR** IS NOW LIVING IN ADELAIDE WITH HIS FAMILY. HE IS STUDYING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND WORKS AS A TRANSLATOR. HIS DAUGHTER HAS STARTED SCHOOL AT KLEMZIG PRIMARY SCHOOL.

**KHADIM** IS LIVING IN LOS ANGELES. HE CONTINUES TO RAISE THE VOICE OF REFUGEES AND IS STUDYING AT FILM SCHOOL.

**TAHIRA** IS LIVING IN TORONTO, CANADA. SHE WORKS IN ADMINISTRATION AND IS SAVING TO GO TO UNIVERSITY. SHE NEVER HEARD FROM HER HUSBAND AGAIN.



## » LINKS

- Australian Human Rights Commission  
<https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/asylum-seekers-and-refugees/asylum-seekers-and-refugees-guide>  
Established in 1986 by an act of the Federal Parliament, the Australian Human Rights Commission is an independent statutory organisation and reports to the Federal Parliament through the Attorney-General.
- Australia for UNHCR  
<http://www.unrefugees.org.au/>  
Australia for UNHCR is an Australian charity that raises funds to support the work of the UN Refugee Agency in Australia. Our purpose is to provide life-changing humanitarian support to refugees and other displaced and stateless people who come under the care and protection of the UN Refugee Agency.
- Department of Immigration and Border Protection  
<http://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Refu>  
The role of the Department of Immigration and Border Protection is to manage the entry and settlement of people in Australia.
- Refugee Council of Australia  
<http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au/>  
The Refugee Council of Australia is the national umbrella body for refugees and the organisations and individuals who support them.
- Settlement Council of Australia  
<http://www.scoa.org.au/>  
The Settlement Council of Australia is the national peak body for settlement. The council represents settlement agencies across Australia providing direct services to people of refugee and migrant background. The council's goal is to help ensure the best possible settlement outcomes for migrants and refugees settling in Australia.
- Parliament of Australia  
[http://www.apf.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/pubs/rp/rp1415/AsylumFacts](http://www.apf.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1415/AsylumFacts)  
The Parliament of Australia website provides access to a series of research papers. This research paper, updated on March 2, 2015, provides information on asylum claims, unauthorised arrivals and irregular migration in Australia and Europe.



## » EDUCATION

Education is a basic human right. The international community recognised this right in 1948 through Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The article affirms the right to free and compulsory education in elementary school and the general availability of technical, professional, and higher education.

Teachers may choose to use these discussion prompts prior to viewing *The Staging Post* or in conjunction with the activities in **5. Starting the school** and **7. The school expands**.

- What are the benefits of education?
- How has your education benefited you?
- How will your education benefit your family?
- How will your education benefit society?
- What access do you have to education because you live in Australia?
- Do you think you take your access to education for granted?
- Have you ever encountered any obstacles in accessing education?
- Why is gender equality in education important?

## » OPERATION SOVEREIGN BORDERS

Operation Sovereign Borders (OSB) is a border protection operation led by the Australian Defence Force and assisted by a number of Australian Federal Government agencies. Its aim is to stop maritime arrivals of asylum seekers to Australia and combat people smuggling. Boats are intercepted and turned back to source and transit countries.

OSB commenced on 18 September 2013. The zero tolerance stance regarding illegal boat arrivals along with mandatory detention was introduced by the Abbott Federal Government. In November 2013 the government claimed that OSB had achieved a ninety percent reduction in illegal maritime arrivals.

OSB is still in effect. International law allows Australia to deny any vessel entry into territorial waters, provided the asylum seekers are not returned to a place in which they may be threatened.

### RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:

Operation Sovereign Borders  
<http://www.osb.border.gov.au/>

### ► *Investigation A: Operation Sovereign Borders*

Your task is to investigate the impact of Operation Sovereign Borders (OSB). This is a collaborative task. Use the following questions to guide your investigation. You may choose how to format the results of your investigation. You will be



expected to share your investigation with your peers.

- How has OSB impacted on the lives of asylum seekers and refugees?
- How has OSB impacted on Australia's relationship with its neighbouring countries?
- How has OSB impacted on Australia's ability to respond to asylum seekers and refugees in a humanitarian way?

Teachers may choose to use this information and ask students to complete the investigation prior to viewing *The Staging Post* or in conjunction with the activities in **1. Turn back the boats** and **2. Cisarua, Indonesia**. The information and investigation support student knowledge and understanding of the plight of the asylum seekers and refugees whose stories are told in *The Staging Post*.

## » IMMIGRATION DETENTION AND OFFSHORE PROCESSING

Immigration detention in Australia is the policy and practice of the Australian Federal Government of detaining in Australian immigration detention facilities non-citizens not holding a valid visa, suspected of visa violations, illegal entry or unauthorised arrival, and those subject to deportation and

removal in immigration detention until a decision is made by the immigration authorities to grant a visa and release them into the community, or to repatriate them to their country of departure. In 1992, Australia adopted a mandatory detention policy obliging the Australian Government to detain all persons entering or being in the country without a valid visa, while their claim to remain in Australia is processed and security and health checks undertaken.

Offshore processing is the term commonly used to describe the arrangements by which Australia sends people seeking asylum who arrive by boat to either Nauru or on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea, where their refugee claims are determined. Offshore processing was first introduced in September and October 2001 by the Australian Government under Prime Minister John Howard. The policy was abolished under Prime Minister Kevin Rudd in 2007. In July 2013, Rudd in his second term as Prime Minister reinstated offshore processing through the Regional Resettlement Arrangement (RRA) between Australia and Papua New Guinea.

Australia is the only country in the world that uses other countries to process refugee claims.

### ► *Investigation B: Offshore processing*

Your task is to investigate the policy and practice of offshore processing in Australia. This is an individual task. Use the following questions to guide your investigation. Having completed your investigation, write a one-minute statement expressing your view of offshore processing. You will be expected to present your statement as part of a class forum about this subject.

- Locate as much information as you can about Australia's policy of offshore processing and the impacts of implementing this policy. Use a Plus-Minus-Interesting chart to help you organise your research.
- What are the arguments for offshore processing?
- What are the arguments against offshore processing?
- Who supports Australia's policy of offshore





processing? In your answer identify individuals and groups and if possible their reasons for supporting the policy and practice of offshore processing.

- Who objects to Australia's policy of offshore processing? In your answer identify individuals and groups and if possible their reasons for objecting to the policy and practice of offshore processing.

Teachers may choose to use this information and ask students to complete the investigation prior to viewing *The Staging Post* or in conjunction with the activities in **1. Turn back the boats** and **2. Cisarua, Indonesia**. The information and investigation support student knowledge and understanding of the plight of the asylum seekers and refugees whose stories are told in *The Staging Post*.

## » UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) safeguards the rights and wellbeing of refugees. Through the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol, UNHCR coordinates international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide.

Countries are responsible for protecting the human rights of their citizens. When they are unable or unwilling to do so, people may suffer violations of their human rights that force them to seek asylum in another country. The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol protect the rights of refugees.

The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol are grounded in Article 14 of the

Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948. Article 14 recognises the right of persons to seek asylum from persecution in other countries.

Teachers and students are advised to access information about the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol online by accessing the UNCHR website: <http://www.unhcr.org/>.

### ► *Investigation C: UNHCR case study*

Your task is to investigate the work of UNHCR in responding to displaced people. This is a collaborative task. Use the following questions and activities to guide your investigation. Having completed your investigation, make an infographic to format the results of your investigation. You will be expected to print your infographic so that it can form a class gallery of infographics about the role that UNHCR plays in addressing the global issue of displacement.

- What is displacement?
- Who are displaced people?
- Access the UNHCR Operational Portal to view a map of current refugee situations: [http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations#\\_ga=2.233490459.488765122.1499663534-1494132491.1499121557](http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations#_ga=2.233490459.488765122.1499663534-1494132491.1499121557).
- Access the UNHCR Operational Portal to view a map of countries experiencing emergencies and/or conflict that have displaced significant numbers of people: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/countries/>.
- Choose a situation or country as the focus of your case study.
- Use electronic resources to research the humanitarian crisis in the country you have selected. The thinking strategy 5Ws and 1H – Who? What? When? Where? Why? And How? may help you to scaffold your research and organise your findings.
- What is UNHCR doing to help?

## » APPENDIX 1: DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

### + Australia stopped the boats, but what happened to the refugees?

When the Australian Government “stopped the boats” I was living in Jakarta and wanted to know more. Who were the refugees? Where did they come from and what were they going to do now?

In October 2013, I rented a car and drove to Cisarua, a small village outside of Jakarta where I had heard they were based. As I drove up the long winding road I was nervous about what I would find. I'm ashamed now to admit that I took my Indonesian language teacher along with me for company - as if the refugees would speak Indonesian.

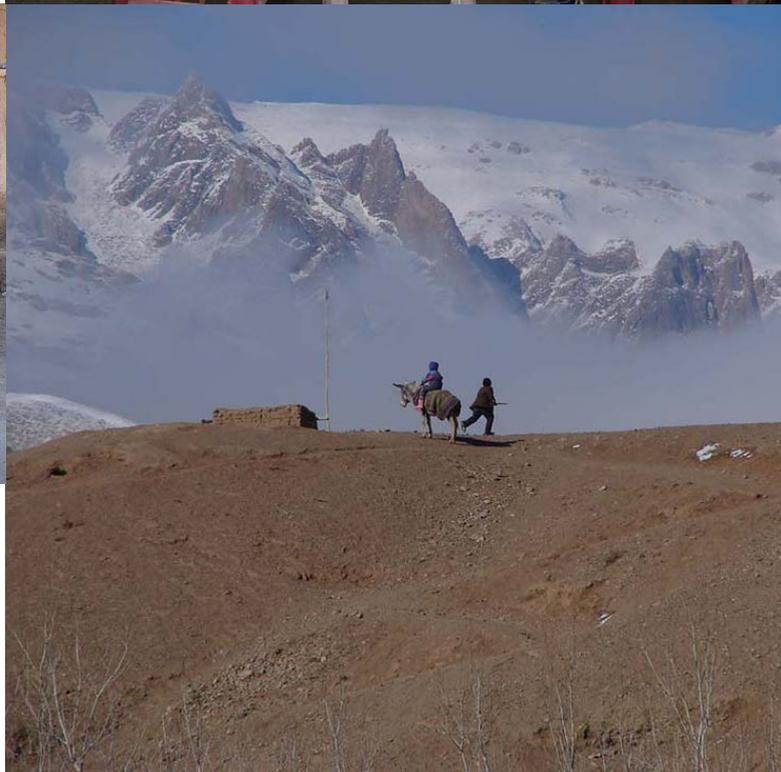
The road was like many other Javanese roads I have been down, weaving together the endless urban landscape that seems to cover all of Java. Narrow, crowded, and flanked



on either side with endless shops selling various cheap goods and food markets. I often wondered why there was always ten of the same shop next to each other- the spice strip, the vegetable stalls, the shoe shops- each with almost identical displays of goods, often it seemed owned by the same person. There was a logic behind the chaos that I never quite grasped.

We drive in fits and starts - left, right, down a hill, over a bridge, past a fork, around a bend- and then suddenly the driver points - “There’s a refugee!”. And that was that. I got out of the car and approached the tall skinny man. I clumsily stuck out my hand and said, “Hi, I’m Jolyon. I’m an Australian”. Then I gave him a firm handshake just like my grandfather taught me to. His name was Hasan. He had a huge smile and sparkly eyes. His English was not good and took me inside to meet his cousin, Rizwana.

Rizwana was tall, beautiful and softly spoken. She made





me tea and we spent the afternoon talking. Her mother and sister sat nearby, but we only exchanged smiles. I asked many dumb questions. It is probably not until you meet people from a different world that you realise how little you know.

Where were they from? *Afghanistan.*

Why did they leave? *They were a persecuted ethnic minority, Hazara, and also were Shia Muslim not Sunni. (I can't remember now if I even knew the difference back then.)*

Were they going to catch a boat to Australia? *No, because they had children and wouldn't take that risk.*

Did they know others taken a boat? *Yes, the family upstairs had taken a boat, but the boat sank and some of the family died. The rest of the family had returned.*

How did they get to Indonesia? *They paid smugglers and came via Malaysia. What were they going to do now? Wait for the UNHCR to register them as refugees.*

I didn't hold back on asking questions and Rizwana gave me straight answers. Eventually she asked me a few questions. When I told her I was a filmmaker she said I must come back and meet her brother, who was a photographer. I said I would and drove back to Jakarta. My Indonesian teacher remarked, "She was so beautiful." I had to agree. But this is not a love story.

A couple of weeks later I returned to meet Rizwana's brother, Muzafar. He was there with another young Hazara refugee, Khadim. Muzafar showed me some of his photographs from central Afghanistan; they were stunning. I wasn't expecting the photographs to be anything much, perhaps just interesting because of the content, but these were gallery-worthy landscape and people photos. I was impressed. Muzafar's friend, Khadim, was 17 and had been filming his friends and flatmates on his mobile phone. He showed me some of his footage. It was remarkable too. Intimate and authentic footage of refugee life in Indonesia.

I'm a documentary filmmaker and we are always trying to represent the real, to capture un-manipulated images of



life. The images that Khadim showed me were exactly that. I was exhilarated. Later Khadim told me that his flatmates would laugh at him, and think he was silly with his mobile phone. No doubt that's why the footage was so authentic and intimate – the subjects thought he was just being a silly kid.

I don't know exactly what I'd been expecting to find when I visited Cisarua, but I'm sure I'd expected to be the one who was there to help. To give. To help come up with some solutions. Yet here I was looking at the holy grail of documentary making, something I'd been trying to capture my whole life, and it was sitting right there on a 17-year-old refugee's mobile phone. This creative connection formed the basis for our connection from then on. In a cultural sense we were equals. We liked each other and decided to start a project together.

### + The creative connection. Making films together.

We started with Khadim's footage. We wrote a script, selected the images and posted a short film online. We had over 100,000 views. People downloaded it and re-posted and there was even a Reddit discussion list with over 600 comments. I loved the discussion on the Reddit list. Because the film was by a seventeen-year-old refugee, all the commentators were respectful. They weren't yelling at each other across a political divide, they were discussing Khadim's film and the human who made it.

This human presentation of the story was reinforced later when Khadim told me more about his story and his journey from Afghanistan to Indonesia. He told me how four times he'd tried to get a boat to Australia. How each time something went wrong. One time he was locked up by the police and escaped over a wall. On the last time he'd been in the back of an ice cream van on his way to the coast when his sister rang – Tony Abbott had changed the laws. He'd be locked up on an island, she told him. He told the other refugees in the truck, jumped out and made his way back to Cisarua.

As I listened to Khadim's story at my kitchen table I was thinking how incredible this kid was, how brave, how resourceful. I kept thinking how the Aussie blokes I grew up with would love this guy. *Bloody good on ya, keep it up, you show em*, they'd say. He was just so damn Aussie. It was like telling yarns of my own suburban escapades as a teenager – riding our BMXs into the bush to escape from the police after we'd not paid for a train ticket, things like that. I also knew that these stories could be viewed very differently. On paper he could be seen as an escaped convict, an illegal immigrant, or even a possible terrorist. But sitting across the table from my new friend it was impossible to see it like that. He was the classic underdog having a go.

I wanted my Australian teenage school friends to meet him. I knew the constant yelling across the political





spectrum was turning them off. They were just trying to get their kids to school and soccer training and manage their households. They weren't uncaring, but they didn't want the endless yelling and political posturing. They couldn't work out what the truth was any more anyway. The left and the right were rabid and it was easier to just turn off.

We made a few more films and which found a wide audience. I helped Khadim with his English and pronunciation and we wrote in some Aussie lingo – “we all chipped in” – things like that. Through the process, Muzafar and Khadim and I became good friends. My family would go to Cisarua on the weekends to play soccer and eat delicious Hazara meals, and they would visit us in Jakarta and stay the night. As they ate our regular, basic family dinners I was always a little embarrassed; Every time I went to their place it was a feast of exotic foods and flavours.

They told me they'd been meeting with other refugees and trying to get an organisation together. Muzafar explained they wanted to create a group that could liaise with the UNHCR and IOM (International Organisation for Migration). I'd been around enough international organisations to know that they didn't have a chance. My wife and I pressed them further. What did they hope to achieve? One thing was education for the children who had been stuck in Indonesia for up to 10 years. We suggested they start their own school, and my wife offered to pay the rent on a space. They estimated a space would cost about \$200 dollars a month- nothing compared to the value of ensuring their children got an education. That conversation started the next chapter of our friendship.

## + The Cisarua Refugee Learning Centre

Muzafar and Khadim went back to Cisarua to see if they could get a consensus in the community. It was school holidays so the family and I, like typical Aussies, went surfing in Bali. In late July 2014, we'd just come back from Canggu when Muzafar rang to say they'd found a place for \$250 a month. We agreed and hung up.

In our lazy Bali routine of morning surfs, afternoon board games and evening Bintangs, we didn't think much more about it, but a week later we got another phone call from Muzafar. The school had 50 students! Caroline and I looked at each other a little stunned. “Looks like we started a school,” I said. She was disbelieving. It was just hard to imagine it and I made up my mind to visit Cisarua as soon as we got back.





On our way home we got another message. There were now 25 kids on the waiting list and families had even relocated from Jakarta so they could come to this “school”. It was strange idea and we had no image to reference what was possibly happening in Cisarua. It was exciting too.

We arrived in Cisarua the next day and there they were, kids jam-packed into small rooms with some of the girls and mothers up the front teaching basic English. The men paced outside writing lists and managing the parents who were asking how to get their children into the school. Recess was a mad kaleidoscope of more than 50 children playing in a small courtyard. All the parents had paid about two dollars each to buy some carpets and whiteboards and a few markers. We had started a school!

It is hard to capture the highs and excitement of those first days. The energy and laughter of the meetings with parents, the long hours spent by the volunteer teachers working out various curriculums from scratch, loading teachers and friends into our car for a trip the Jakarta markets for school supplies, the kids coming together in cultural dance and songs, and of course football.

One day that really stands out to me in these early days of the school was the trip to the Australian International School (AIS). Our kids went to AIS, a typical expat private school in Jakarta; very exclusive in the context of Indonesia. I'd encouraged some of the AIS teachers to visit the refugee school (CRLC) and, in turn, the AIS teachers had decided to invite the refugees to AIS for International Week.

The CRLC students and teachers took the invitation extremely seriously. They rehearsed a performance and practiced every day after school. When the day came there was huge excitement. AIS had sent two buses and the CRLC students and teachers set out from Cisarua before dawn. Overexcited kids are the same the world over and the two-hour journey to Jakarta was endless dancing, clapping and hijinks. Even the adults were dancing in the buses aisles. I know this because I'd given my camera to Khadim and he'd been filming the whole time.

The performance in the school hall was mesmerising and exquisitely choreographed – a combination of dancing and pantomime, with Muzafar presenting his photos on slides and narrated a story based on life in Afghanistan according to the seasons.

This AIS kids were aged about six to eight and loved the show, like all kids that age. I was standing at the back of the room and it was the parents and teachers that I found fascinating. Like myself a year earlier with Muzafar's photos, I could see they were expecting a half-baked presentation. Their unspoken assumption was that AIS was 'giving', that the exercise of watching the performance was out of charity. When they saw an entertaining, thoughtful, colourful, well-rehearsed show, executed at a more professional level than any show I'd seen their kids perform, I sensed their surprise.



For me it was another triumph for culture. Everyone has as much story to tell as another and these stories are not better or worse.

After the show, Muzafar, in his special Afghan cap, came down the front and answered questions from the kids. Why did you leave? Don't you love your country and don't you want to go back? Do the police want you in your country? The kids had picked up the Australian cultural currents, and without a filter, they asked them point blank.

Muzafar answered the questions openly and gently. He loved Afghanistan and would love to go back, but right now there were people who didn't want him there because of his flat nose and Asian-looking eyes, and his religion. Having just seen his photos his response and love for his country was undeniable.

Afterwards everyone retired outside and the kids played in a proper playground.

On that day, one of the refugee parents had their case with the UNCHR denied for the third time, meaning he no longer had any chance of being given refugee status. The parent told Muzafar afterwards that he'd considered going to the UNHCR and setting himself on fire, but when he'd seen his children perform at AIS he knew he could never do this. It had given him the strength to go on. Three years later I still know that man. His family are some of my best friends in Cisarua. All attend or teach at the CRLC. He is still fighting to have his case reopened.

Other children and teachers told me that it was the best day of their lives, and I could see in their eyes they meant it. It's really something special to be involved in giving someone the best day of their life. A photo of that day is still on the wall in the office at the CRLC. None of us will ever forget it – it set the marker of what we wanted the school to be. The connection and the pride still resonates in everything we do at the CRLC. The AIS teachers and students still support the

school. Soon some of the refugee kids are going to perform in the AIS Idol event soon! I don't live in Indonesia any more but that's something I'd like to see.

Things happened quickly after that. We found a new building – this time for \$7000 per year, but we raised the money through family and friends. Teachers came from Australia to train our teachers, interns came and stayed for months, university groups visited on study tours and the teachers and students continued to learn.

The school is in its fourth year now. Our students have grown up. Five-year-olds became nine-year-olds, twelve-year-olds became young adults. Four years in a kids school life is a long time and I'm happy that these children were able to continue their education in spite of the circumstance their families found themselves in. Some of our students have been resettled where they are class captains and their modern world teachers are amazed at their English proficiency and knowledge. A university scholar is even writing a paper that proposes the refugees at the CRLC have achieved more in three years than those resettled in Australia. When I visit, the kids come up and say hello in English. I love their Aussie accents!

There are now nearly 200 people at the school each day – 110 kids in the mornings, 59 older women in the afternoon and 12 online students. It is run by 18 volunteer refugee teachers and managers. While we have over 100 kids on our waiting list, we are most proud of the fact that there are now six other refugee schools in Indonesia. Over 1000 refugees in limbo getting some level of education, all inspired by the Cisarua Refugee Learning Centre.

Khadim continued to film and Muzafar to take photographs, and we are editing a feature length documentary. It will be released in the middle of 2017.

*Jolyon Hoff*



## » APPENDIX 2: CURRICULUM LINKS

### + A. Australian Curriculum specific links

#### Year 8 Geography

- Reasons for, and effects of, international migration in Australia (ACHGK058)

#### Year 10 History

- The origins and significance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including Australia's involvement in the development of the declaration (ACDSEH023)
- The waves of post-World War II migration to Australia, including the influence of significant world events (ACDSEH144)
- The impact of changing government policies on Australia's migration patterns, including abolition of the White Australia Policy, 'Populate or Perish' (ACDSEH145)
- The impact of at least ONE world event or development and its significance for Australia, such as the Vietnam War and Indochinese refugees (ACDSEH146)
- The contribution of migration to Australia's



changing identity as a nation and to its international relationships (ACDSEH147)

#### Senior Secondary Modern History

- An overview, as background, of the volume and forms of migration before 1945, including legal and illegal migrants, mass migration to former settler colonies and refugee movements (ACHMH208)
- The international legal and organisational frameworks for the movement of people, including the 1948 Universal Declaration, the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1967 Protocol, the anti-trafficking protocol of the Palermo Convention (2000), International Labor Organisation (ILO) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (ACHMH211)
- Displacement arising from conflict and persecution (1975 - 2010) (ACHMH213)

### + B. The table below provides web link information for curriculum documents in each state and territory.

LOCATION	FOR MORE INFO
Australian Capital Territory	ACT Government Education Directorate <a href="http://www.education.act.gov.au/teaching_and_learning/curriculum_programs">http://www.education.act.gov.au/teaching_and_learning/curriculum_programs</a> ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies <a href="http://www.bsbs.act.edu.au/curriculum">http://www.bsbs.act.edu.au/curriculum</a>
New South Wales	NSW Education Standards Authority <a href="http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/new-nsw-k10-syllabus/">http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/new-nsw-k10-syllabus/</a>
Northern Territory	NT School Curriculum <a href="https://nt.gov.au/learning/primary-and-secondary-students/nt-school-curriculum">https://nt.gov.au/learning/primary-and-secondary-students/nt-school-curriculum</a>
Queensland	Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority <a href="https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/">https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/</a>
South Australia	Government schools: <a href="https://myintranet.learnlink.sa.edu.au/educating/curriculum-years-r-10/australian-curriculum">https://myintranet.learnlink.sa.edu.au/educating/curriculum-years-r-10/australian-curriculum</a> Catholic schools: <a href="http://www.cesa.catholic.edu.au/our-schools/learning-teaching/australian-curriculum">http://www.cesa.catholic.edu.au/our-schools/learning-teaching/australian-curriculum</a> Independent schools: <a href="http://www.ais.sa.edu.au/teaching-learning/australian-curriculum">http://www.ais.sa.edu.au/teaching-learning/australian-curriculum</a>
Tasmania	Tasmanian Government Department of Education <a href="https://www.education.tas.gov.au/">https://www.education.tas.gov.au/</a>
Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority <a href="http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/">http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/</a></li> <li>• Further advice for Independent schools: <a href="https://www.is.vic.edu.au/for-teachers/curriculum/australian-curriculum/">https://www.is.vic.edu.au/for-teachers/curriculum/australian-curriculum/</a></li> </ul>
Western Australia	Government of Western Australia School Curriculum and Standards Authority <a href="http://k10outline.scsa.wa.edu.au/">http://k10outline.scsa.wa.edu.au/</a>

## » APPENDIX 3: GLOSSARY

Use print and electronic sources to help you write a definition for each of the listed terms. Many of these terms are used in *The Staging Post*. All of the terms are relevant to the discussion of asylum seekers and refugees. There is room for you to add terms to the glossary.

\*A term is a word or phrase used to describe a thing or to express a concept.

TERM	DEFINITION
1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees	
Asylum seeker	
Destination country	
Displaced person	
Hazaras	
Illegal maritime arrival	
Immigration detention	
Mandatory detention	
Offshore processing	
Operation Sovereign Borders	
People smuggling	
Refugee	
Source country	
Taliban	
Transit country	
Turnbacks	
Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948	
UNHCR	
Visa	



This study guide was produced by **ATOM**. (© ATOM 2017)  
ISBN: 978-1-76061-065-4 **editor@atom.org.au**

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