

Interconnecting history Education and Democratic Citizenship Education / Human Rights Education: Good Practices from the United Kingdom / Scotland

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Britain and its Migrant History

Britain has always been a multicultural society reaching back to Celtic, Anglo-Saxon, Viking and Norman settlement. From the 18th century on slaves from the Caribbean were forcefully brought to the country; in the early 19th century Eastern European Jews arrived party fleeing from anti-Jewish pogroms in their home country, followed by German Jews in the 1930's. In the post-second world war decades migrants from the former colonial British Empire and the Commonwealth arrived, followed more recently by refugees, asylum seekers and migrant workers from the Central European countries joining the European Union in 2004. According to the most recent 2001 census the net migration was at 140,000 each year. (Home office statistics 1999-2001).

So what good practice measures did Britain put in place to connect history education with citizenship education in a migration society, and to ensure everyone is treated fairly regardless of race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religion and belief and age?

Good Practices

The British government has put a number of laws in place to ensure equality and human rights, i.e. the Race Relations Acts from 1976 2000. Local governments have supported the migrant communities by producing welcome packs of information on housing, education, language and employment. There are local community drop-in centres set up for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees where they can come together, access information from different agencies and get support with English language and citizenship classes. The drop-in centres are run by churches, local government agencies, NGOs and other organisations and volunteers in the area, supporting the integration and community cohesion and making people feel welcome.

There are various migrant and refugee fora, a user-led infrastructure which helps to build capacity and tackles social exclusion of migrants and refugee communities. In addition there are supports networks who campaign for migrant rights and organisations and infrastructure bodies who help support and

provide information for their legal status and pave way through various training programmes in to employment. For instance the Fresh Talent Scheme provides and enhances employment skills. In each region where there is a significant influx of migrants, the local communities and organisations have helped to set up many community support groups and networks across the country to ensure their voices are heard and help is at hand. In order to integrate communities, organisations, police, local authorities, housing and other NGOs set up local community cohesion events, where migrants can learn from each other's cultures and learn from the services and organisations that showcase information.

Exhibitions and the History Month are celebrated around the country recognising the contribution of the existing migrant communities made to the British economy from the first generation of migrants to the 2nd generation of migrants and the new migrant communities. The Media Award is a good example of an award ceremony tool to highlight and promote positive contribution and fair reporting of asylum and migrant communities in Scotland. The celebration doesn't just stop here but with a comedy night where comedians could stand up for refugees rights "It's no Laughing Matter, but it certainly is funny"; and clients tell live stories, in addition, the night is used to fundraise for the work of the charity.