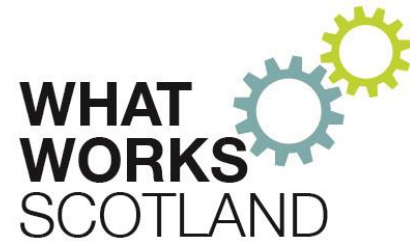


Educational needs and experiences of refugee children in Scotland

Maureen McBride



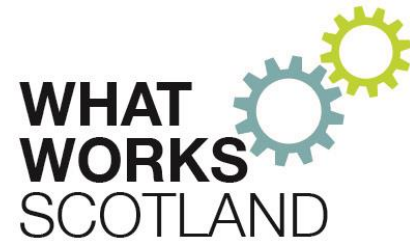
Research summary



- Report based on a collaborative, qualitative research project, commissioned by Save the Children.
- Gap in the literature – refugee children’s / families voices.
- Four case study sites – Glasgow, Edinburgh, North Lanarkshire, Aberdeenshire.
- 64 participants:
 - 25 refugee children
 - 21 parents
 - 18 stakeholders (e.g. head teachers, class teachers, EAL workers, refugee resettlement officers, Social Work, and community workers).
- Methods – combination of interviews, group discussions, observations and informal discussions in schools, and creative work with younger children (drawing, photography).



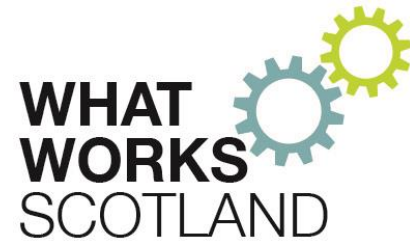
Experiences of school



- *'I feel very proud to be part of this school'.*
- *'One young lad came when he was 16 and within six months had got Standard Grade English in his back pocket'.*
- *'Anxieties about the gaps in education and language'*



Initial welcoming



- Initial welcoming techniques (tours, introductions, buddy schemes) beneficial
- Not always in place: limited ability to 'plan' for children's arrival
- Many experience initial isolation
- Language a key factor



Extracurricular activities

- Participation in extracurricular activities crucial to children's integration and overall wellbeing
- Favourite part of school: *“when we are all together, playing football or at the community centre or swimming pool”*.
- Disparities in provision: resource challenges, reliant on goodwill of staff.



Language

- English language learning most frequently raised issue from families
- Shortage of bilingual teachers, challenges in ESOL provision
- EAL specialists: *'it is not about just cramming in as much English language teaching as possible'*



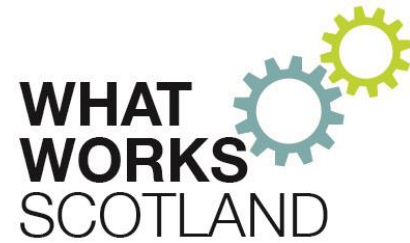
Curriculum and exams

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- Some emerging success stories
- Older children worried about being able to pass the examinations required to pursue certain post school pathways.
- Language barriers shaping participation levels in certain subjects: *'with chemistry you can make chemicals with your hands, but this [modern studies] you need words'*.



Recommendations



- Schools must be effectively resourced if they are to act as a 'hub' for integration.
- More bilingual support would facilitate refugee children's English language development and support their ability to keep up with the broader curriculum.
- Supporting children to achieve qualifications.

