

Migrants' Rights Network



www.migrantsrights.org.uk

*Presentation at the Nigerian Schools Foundation, 9th
June, 2018*

Migrants' Rights Network



- Fighting for a fair and humane immigration system
- Advocating for the rights of all migrants, *regardless of immigration status*
- Amplifying the voices of migrants and Migrants' Rights Community organisations to advocate for positive and effective policy change

Structure of this presentation



- Reflection exercise
- Introduction to the 'hostile environment' for migrants
- MRN's Know Your Rights guide for migrants
- What you can do
- Discussion



Reflection:

If you were not born in this country, take a moment to think back to when you arrived.

What words would you use to describe how you felt when you first arrived?

Did you feel 'welcome'?

What challenges did you face?



“You broke the ocean in half to be here. only to meet
nothing that wants you. – immigrant”

- By Nayyirah Waheed, from her book of poems called
'Salt'

Hostile Environment

- Have you heard about the 'hostile environment' for migrants?
- What do you understand by this?
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5DATMsf6aIQ>
- Reactions?

Hostile Environment

- What is meant by 'illegal immigrant'?
- Why might people end up with irregular status:
 - Lack of legal representation/poor legal representation
 - Delays in the processing of their immigration application
 - Mental health/trauma issues, e.g. survivors of torture or trafficking
 - Very expensive Home Office fees
 - Loss of documents; e.g. the 62 people whose documents were lost by the Home Office and were wrongly deported
- Makes it impossible for people without documents to live a 'normal' life, for example, rent a house, find work, drive, etc.
- It turns everyday people in our community into 'border guards' - impacts BAME people more widely due to racism, e.g. Right to Rent, Health Checks

Know Your Rights guide for migrants



Please take a few minutes to look at the guide.

Any initial feedback/thoughts?

Hostility towards migrants is not something new, though...

For these dangerous and divisive elements the legislation proposed in the Race Relations Bill is the very pabulum they need to flourish. Here is the means of showing that the immigrant communities can organise to consolidate their members, to agitate and campaign against their fellow citizens, and to overawe and dominate the rest with the legal weapons which the ignorant and the ill-informed have provided. As I look ahead, I am filled with foreboding; like the Roman, I seem to see "the River Tiber foaming with much blood."

- Enoch Powell's *Rivers of Blood* speech, 1968

Know Your Rights guide for migrants



- Helping migrants to understand and assert their rights
- Migrants as rights-holders
- A collaborative approach to provide quality information in specialist areas
- An accessible guide
- Migrants advocating for themselves

Where people affected can go for advice:



This following list not exhaustive:

- Hackney Migrant Centre
- Greenwich Migrant Hub
- Praxis
- Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network (LRMN)
- Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants

What you can do



Learning More

- Sign up to receive the MRN newsletter
- Join grassroots groups campaigning for an end to the hostile environment, event on 28th June, *Beyond Windrush: building the movement for migrants' rights:*

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/beyond-windrush-building-the-movement-for-migrants-rights-tickets-46533305369?utm-medium=discovery&utm-campaign=social&utm-content=attendeeshare&aff=escb&utm-source=cp&utm-term=eventcard>

What you can do continued...



Volunteering

- SOAS Detainee Support group – visiting people in immigration detention centres:

<https://soasdetaineesupport.wordpress.com/visiting/>

- Akwaaba – *a volunteer-run social centre for migrants:*

<http://akwaaba.org.uk/volunteers/>