

Introduction and Methods

Over 250,000 Syrians have lost their lives in the civil war and more than 11 million displaced, with almost a million refugees relocated to Europe. Resettlement is directly associated with integration but one of the core barriers related with this process is language learning. The aim is to provide a review of current language facilities in order to improve language practice at the Coventry Refugee & Migrant Centre. Data will be obtained through observations and interviews.

Q: How can we improve refugee and asylum seekers' rate of second language acquisition?



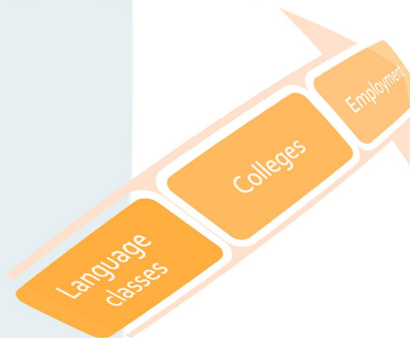
Key Findings

What is provided?

The language provision is sponsored by the hospice of Coventry city sanctuary movement, the city made an agreement in building a culture of hospitality for those seeking sanctuary here in the UK.

What the future holds?

Six months after arriving in Coventry, refugees can apply to the city college and take formal qualification - a crucial step in entering the job market and starting a new life. However, the colleges only accept students depending on their achievements and on their ability to obtain a certain level in a limited amount of time.



The basic language class:

- Two tutors available at any given time.
- Mutual respect and bonding is significant throughout, highlighted 5mins before the end when taught greetings in each person's home language.
- Students are considered beginners, varying from illiterate to intermediate English, for example: one tutor with 14 students may have 5 of which are illiterate in English.
- There can be a large imbalance and difficulties when constructing a basic lesson plan, tutors can struggle to predict of the number of students within the two-hour sessions which again puts a strain on the effectiveness and productivity.

The accelerated class:

- Two tutors but for a concentrated number of approximately 5 students.
- Assistance with writing CVs and rehearsing job interviews.
- The students require a high level of English.
- There is strong bond between students and tutors characterised by their interactions and mannerisms.
- They are encouraged to exchange numbers if they need help outside the classroom.
- Tutors often introduce new words to broaden their vocabulary - emphasising the definition until fully understood.
- Smartphones and dictionaries are a tremendous asset allowing students to translate on their own and gain some vital confidence.

The IT classes*:

- Basic introduction for students who have no experience in office technology.
- Using mainly PCs, it offers a platform to experience business software.
- Difficulties occur as many with low level in English and would not fully understand the instructions provided vocally.
- Most of them were participating in order to find employment without fully knowing how to respond to job offers. *Observations based on a single visit.

Conclusion - making a difference

Challenges:

- Informing the target audience - many refugees are either illiterate or have a poor level of English comprehension.
- Unpredictable class sizes are an issue, the lack of volunteers has a large impact on the classes and the ability to organize regular lessons.

Next steps:

- Create a series of illustrative, graphics based posters which communicate the help available.
- Reach out to enlist the support from the volunteers of University of Warwick.