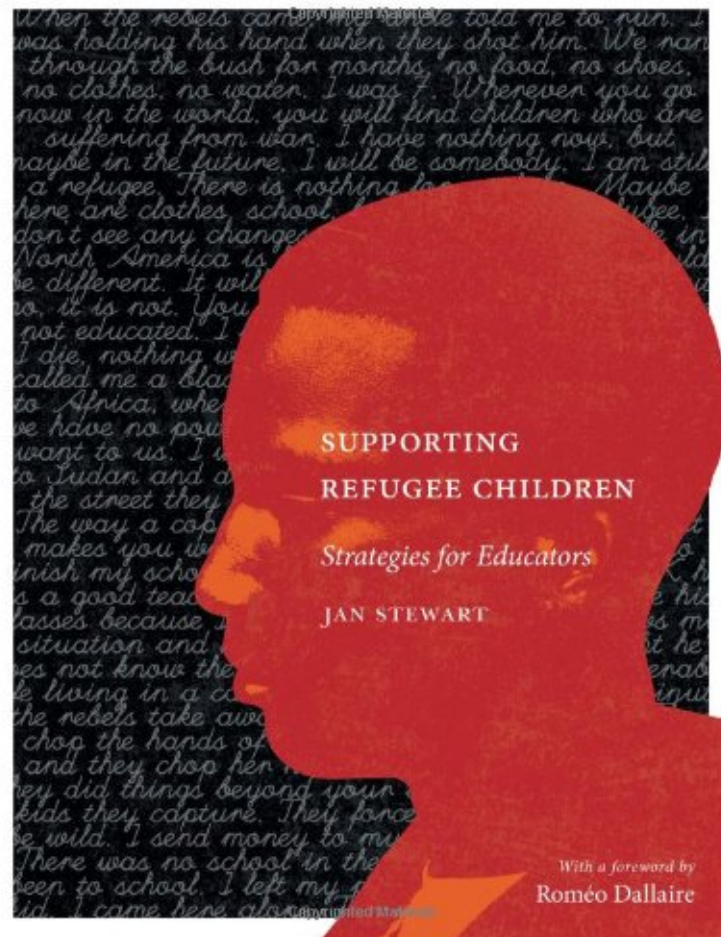


Supporting Refugee Children: Strategies for Educators

Jan Stewart

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Jan Stewart : Supporting Refugee Children: Strategies for Educators before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Supporting Refugee Children: Strategies for Educators:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Excellent bookBy Peter HustonSupporting Refugee Children Strategies for Educators, by Jan Stewart. 2011. University of Toronto Press, 348 pp.The world is full of conflict and wars of many types in many places. Such conflicts leave large numbers of refugees in their wake. Through a complex process largely outside the scope of this book, many of these refugees are resettled in western nations with a history of accepting immigrants. In nations that accept refugees, educators who teach refugees would improve their efficiency and understanding if they had a better understanding of refugees and specifically the special needs of children who have been exposed to war who they will be called upon to educate.The U.S.A. is one nation that accepts large numbers of refugees from around the globe. Canada is another. Although this book was written by a Canadian and uses Canadian examples, there was nothing in it that I felt would be inappropriate if applied in an American setting.The

author, a Canadian educator, discussed the needs of immigrant children who are affected by war. Although immigrant children generally have a wide variety of special needs, such as language help, cultural adaptation assistance and the complex issue of assimilation versus cultural adaptation, and issues of struggling to obtain an education while working through the need to adjust to a new country and often a new style of education, refugee students often have even more and often very complex issues to deal with, and these issues often affect teachers or require the understanding and active intervention by a teacher if the student is able to receive the help they need. For instance, it is not uncommon for refugee students to have very limited English and interrupted formal schooling. Often they come to school both older and less prepared than most of the local students. Their expectations or stated goals are often grossly unrealistic. For example, according to this book, it is not uncommon for a school that serves a refugee population to be presented with 16 year old students who read and write at a 3rd grade level and have never had a science class, but who enter school announcing that their goal is to study hard and become a doctor. Such students also often come from a badly broken or stressed family support network (often due to the casualties of war and the refugee experience) and are required to work long hours at a low paying job to support their family. The drop-out rate among them is high, and after dropping out many get into trouble with the law. And these are the practical concrete issues. The emotional needs of such students are often complex, draining, and difficult. At times just reading this book was difficult. There were several references, for instance, to children who either experienced or witnessed other having their hands chopped off by child soldiers in African war zones, as well as rape and human trafficking. However, these subjects form part of the reality of life for many people in our world and nation. In the first portion of the book, the author provides background and facts, and then mixes them with personal examples, the experiences of others, as well as offering academic theoretical frameworks for understanding the needs of these students. I thought the author did an excellent job of mixing theory and experience in a single narrative. In the second portion of the book, the author offers a variety of classroom activities, often of an arts and crafts sort, to encourage and help students to share and process their experiences and pave the way for better integration into school and society. These projects, exercises, and activities were well presented although they tended to be of the sort that would be supplemental to a standard education instead of an integral part of it. All in all, I felt this book, although lengthy and at times emotionally draining was well worth reading and helped make me a better teacher.

The psychosocial needs of war-affected children who migrate to other countries are difficult to identify, complicated to understand, and even more troubling to address. *Supporting Refugee Children* provides a holistic exploration of these challenges and offers practical advice for teachers, social workers, and counsellors, as well as suggestions for policy makers.

Stewart has done an exemplary job of bringing to light the difficulties refugee children experience upon resettlement... A highly commendable piece of work. (Dr. Lloyd Axworthy, President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Winnipeg) Jan Stewart's work is at once scholarly, profoundly moving, and practical. It is helpful not only to Canadian educators and administrators, but also to those in other countries of resettlement. (J. Lynn McBrien, College of Education, University of South Florida) Essential reading for all educators. With passion and understanding, Stewart shows how young refugees see education as their hope for the future, yet are frequently failed or re-victimized by the education system. Filled with insight and practical suggestions, this book lights the way toward a more humane approach to education. (Michael Wessells, Columbia University Program on Forced Migration and Health) If we really care about refugee students in our classrooms, we must rethink and reshape our understanding of learning so that our teaching links more fundamentally to the experiences of refugees. Stewart's book responds to this call in a thoughtful and caring manner, providing an insightful classroom-oriented resource for educators and offering a balance of theory, research, and recommendations for practice. (Grace Feuerberger, Ontario Institute for the Studies of Education, University of Toronto) Anyone forced to flee repression in their home country anyone forced to leave everything behind dies a little. When I was a child, my family and I had to gather all of our strength and what little we had to escape to Canada. We relied on the understanding and generosity of those who welcomed us. This book portrays those hardships and shows how the slightest kind gesture or compassionate word can make an enormous difference. (The Rt. Honourable Michaëlle Jean, UNESCO Special Envoy for Haiti) About the Author Jan Stewart is Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Winnipeg. The recipient of the 2010 Marsha Hanen Global Dialogue and Ethics Award, she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in teacher preparation and counsellor education and is the author of numerous books, including *The Tough Stuff Series* (2000), *The STARS Program* (1999, 2003), and the bestselling *The Anger Workout Book for Teens* (2002). For more information on the author, visit www.janstewart.net.