

Tool 6: Intersectional language

This tool helps you to think about how language can be a vehicle of oppression or can be used for liberation.

1. Read the two extracts below.
2. Reflect on the question.

Extract from PM statement on Stop the Boats

'Today we are introducing new legislation to keep my promise to you – to stop the boats.

My policy is very simple, it is this country – and your government – who should decide who comes here, not criminal gangs.

Those illegally crossing the Channel are not directly fleeing a war-torn country... or persecution... or an imminent threat to life.

They have travelled through safe, European countries.

They are paying people smugglers huge sums to make this dangerous, and sometimes tragic, journey.

The reason that criminal gangs continue to bring small boats over here is because they know that our system can be exploited...

...that once here...illegal migrants can make a multitude of asylum, modern slavery and spurious human rights claims to frustrate their removal.

And the risk remains that those individuals just disappear into the black economy.

People must know that if they come here illegally it will result in their detention and swift removal.

Once this happens – and they know it will happen – they will not come, and the boats will stop.

That is why today we are introducing legislation to make clear that if you come here illegally you can't claim asylum...

...you can't benefit from our modern slavery protections...

...you can't make spurious human rights claims

...and you can't stay.

We will detain those who come here illegally and then remove them in weeks, either to their own country if it is safe to do so, or to a safe third country like Rwanda.

And once you are removed, you will be banned – as you are in America and Australia – from ever re-entering our country.'

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, Published 7 March 2023

Refugee Council UK Statement

No matter where you are from or which war you are running from, your life matters! It isn't too late to create an asylum system in the UK which treats **everybody** with fairness and humanity, regardless of how they have arrived here. We have set out a five-point action plan which ministers could immediately put in place:

1. Give refugees and people seeking asylum a fair hearing in the UK, no matter how they arrive, in keeping with commitments to international law.
2. Pilot refugee visas which people seeking asylum could apply for at embassies and other official sites around the world, to enable safe routes to the UK.
3. Make it easier for families separated by war and violence to reunite by expanding existing schemes, including by letting separated refugee children be joined by their closest family members.
4. Deliver on the Prime Minister's pledge to reduce the backlog of people waiting for a decision on their asylum claim.
5. Collaborate with the French Government and other EU countries to make it safer for people to seek protection across the continent and to further crack down on people smugglers.

From: [A Fair and Humane Asylum System - Refugee Council](#) (Accessed 29 June 2023)



Reflective question:

- > Where do you consider language is used as a vehicle of oppression or of liberation in these statements?

You may find it helpful to reflect on feedback from participants in the Change Project:

- > *'Inclusivity starts with language.'*
- > *'Enabling critical consciousness is about giving someone language.'*
- > *'Our language can create borders and divisions or can create connections.'*
- > *'Language has such an impact, and lack of awareness can be a barrier to identity and feeling like you belong.'*