

Immigration and racism

Discussion

Discuss these questions in small groups:

1. What different ethnic groups are there in your town / region?
2. Where have they come from and why?
3. Does your country offer help to refugees? If so, are you happy that your taxes help to support them?

Reading

Read the article and decide if these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

1. The villagers don't mind that the refugees are living nearby.
2. Little Hurling was the only place the refugees could go.

ASYLUM SEEKERS provided accommodation for seekers. They are afraid that if they return home, they will be killed or persecuted. After the terrible time they have had in their own country, they need some peace and quiet to help them recover.

There was trouble yesterday in the village of Little Hurling in Kent as 150 Kosovar refugees arrived to stay in the Hurling Business Centre just outside the village. Local people, upset that no one had spoken to them before sending the refugees there, held a protest meeting in the village hall. "We are a tolerant group of people in Little Hurling," said Major Ronald Smythe, who has lived in the village for 25 years. "We are happy that the government has offered assistance to these people and

provided accommodation for them. But Little Hurling is not the place they should be. It would be better if they were in a large town or city."

Amanda Parker-White, 52, leader of the village committee, said: "There is no entertainment here, no cinema, no library, and only one small village shop. The point is: what are these people going to do?"

Basil Lloga, a spokesman for the refugees, said: "I am sure the villagers are not discriminating against these people. Most of them have come here as genuine asylum

seekers. They are afraid that if they return home, they will be killed or persecuted. After the terrible time they have had in their own country, they need some peace and quiet to help them recover."

"Unfortunately, there was no time to talk to the villagers", said Kim Thompson of the government's Refugee Action Group. "We only found out the refugees were arriving this morning and there was nowhere else for them to go. We very much hope the villagers will welcome them and accept them into the community."

Read the article again and answer these questions:

1. Why do the villagers think Little Hurling is not a good place for refugees?
2. Why might it be a good place for refugees, according to Basil Lloga?
3. Why did nobody talk to the villagers first?

Discussion

1. Do you think the villagers are being honest about their reasons for wanting the refugees elsewhere? If not, what do you think the real reasons are?
2. How do you think the villagers in a small village in your country would react if 150 refugees were sent to live nearby?
3. How would you personally react?