



WORKSHEET: AYLAN KURDI

Media coverage of the refugee crisis, as well as of other historical events, has a huge impact on how we perceive these events. As a report by the UN Refugee Agency on the press coverage of the refugee and migrant crisis in the EU stated in December 2015, „It is impossible to ignore the role of the mass media in influencing public and elite political attitudes towards asylum and migration. The mass media can set agendas and frame debates. They provide the information which citizens use to make sense of the world and their place with it. The research shows that in many countries, refugees and migrants have tended to be framed negative as a problem, rather than a benefit to host societies. However it is also true that, on occasion, media can have positive impacts on public attitude and policy.“

Media Coverage on Syrian Boy Aylan Kurdi

Such a positive impact was seen in the beginning of September 2015, as the front pages of newspapers across the world have been dominated by images of a drowned three year-old Syrian boy, Aylan Kurdi, washed up on a beach in Turkey after his family’s attempt to reach Greece ended in tragedy.

A research done by Sheffield University showed that the image of Aylan Kurdi spread to 20 million screens around the world in just 12 hours. The Guardian reported a surge in donations to charities and NGO’s because of the publication of the images.



Different newspapers reporting the death of 3 years old Aylan Kurdi, September 3rd, 2015
 Aylan Kurdi: How a single image transformed the debate on immigration. The University of Sheffield News, 14.12.2015.

- Can you think of other photos of children that had turn iconic for a specific historical event?



- Why do children turn into icons of historical events? Why is it easier to create sympathy for children?
- Why is it perhaps easier to speak of child refugees rather than of adult refugees?