

**Session code: 1-6-A104**

**Title:** Identity, Boundary and Schooling: Perspectives on the Experiences and Perceptions of Refugee Children

**Contributer/s:** Leslie Bash, Elena Zezlina-Phillips

**Abstract :** In assuming ethnic/national identity as problematic we examine its dynamic aspects in the context of refugee children and their educational experiences. While the starting point of our analysis is a deconstruction of ethnic/national identity in conventional terms of language, religion, education, etc. the emerging focus is the notion of boundary. On the one hand, we look at the relevance of fluid boundaries for identity formation, while on the other hand, the experience of crossing boundaries will also be examined, particularly in the case of forced migration and displacement. Boundaries are conceptualized in the context of a continuum in which the experiences of refugee children range across school, home, locality, and country.

To illustrate the central arguments a case study of a child refugee from Kosovo is highlighted. The child, the older of two brothers arriving in the UK about four years ago attends a in London primary school, where they are the only refugees. Preliminary observations, together with subsequent small group discussions and semi-structured interviews with the child and other pupils, serve to identify how the child relates to the various spaces in the school. Pedagogically, mental mapping tasks are used to reveal perceptions of the school and its immediate environment, and of the journey that has brought him there. These are subsequently transformed into a board game to gather further information about his and other children's perception of the school environment.