

## What do “Danish Grandparents” do for refugees?

- We demonstrate every fortnight in front of **Sandholm Refugee Centre** (photo right), as well as regularly in connection with the centres at Avnstrup and Kongelunden, and at Grønttorvet in Odense. Refer to our home page for the various dates and venues, come along and take part!
- We have a high-profile presence at the annual **People’s Meeting (Folkemødet)** on the Danish island of Bornholm
- We support both individual asylum seekers and refugee families
- To reach the widest possible public, we use various other forms of action, e.g. writing **letters to the press** and **handing out leaflets** in the streets
- We also deliver **lectures** and are happy to participate in **public debates**
- We collaborate with other NGOs in **conferences, mass demonstrations** and **torchlight processions**



*“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” (Heb.13:2)*

## What can you do for “Danish Grandparents”?

Convey our message and indignation to your family and friends! We need you as a volunteer! Many of us in *Bedsteforældre for Asyl* also help refugee families on an individual basis. **You can help** us achieve our aims by joining our own demonstrations, attending our full meetings, and writing to the press – even if you are also a member of another group. You don’t have to have grandchildren yourself. Arrange a meeting in your network – **we will be happy to assist**, but please first register for our **newsletter**.

## Support our Campaign!

Having our own stand at the **People’s Meeting** isn’t cheap. Trusts and individuals have donated **significant sums** towards our work. With this money we have arranged and funded events for refugee children: Christmas parties, circus performances, high school fees and transport. We can testify that **enjoyable experiences** away from the daily routine of a refugee centre in spite of everything can **restore the sparkle to a child’s eyes**. Your contribution will be gratefully received, and can be paid into Skjern Bank, reg.nr. **7780**, a/c **1930866**. Learn more at: [www.bedsteforaeldreforasyl.dk](http://www.bedsteforaeldreforasyl.dk) and follow us on **Facebook**. Write to our Committee, if you have any questions.

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# “Danish Grandparents” Campaign for Refugee Children



The Grandparents assembled outside the parliament building in Copenhagen, Christiansborg, where they interrupted the Minister’s presentation of the Bill restricting access to asylum by singing “Childhood’s Country” in the public gallery

**There are children who must flee,**  
*but you have nothing to fear.*

*No one is going to treat you badly – I hope.*

– Danish songwriter Benny Andersen

**Bedsteforældre for Asyl (BfA)** is a movement for **Danish Grandparents** independent of political parties, other NGOs and commercial interests. Our goal is to fight for the humane, considerate and fair treatment of **asylum seekers** and refugee families, especially **refugee children**. We speak with an **authority** borne of **age, experience** and **long perspective**. We are currently campaigning for the UN’s **Convention on the Rights of the Child** to be incorporated into Danish law. This would improve the legal status of both refugee children and Danish children.



## “Danish Grandparents” are campaigning for:

- changes to Denmark’s **asylum policies**, so that refugees whose applications are rejected but cannot return to the area they have fled from, **aren’t forced into years of insecurity** and hopelessness
- the opportunity for these asylum seekers to lead **normal lives** with the rest of us, with the right to **education and work**
- permission for asylum seekers with **educational qualifications** and **trade skills** to make themselves useful for the **good of Danish society**
- the right of the families of both convention refugees and those given temporary protection to join them as soon as asylum is granted

## “Danish Grandparents” have ten demands:

1. In its treatment of asylum seekers and refugees, **Denmark must observe all the international conventions** and agreements that its Government has signed, and which will guarantee women’s, men’s and children’s personal **freedom, dignity and welfare**.
2. The ruling prohibiting the **splitting up of families** contained in the Human Rights and Children’s Conventions must be respected. The **child’s best interest** must be protected by means of separate legal representation.
3. The **Danish Institute for Human Rights** must be recognised as the independent national authority for ensuring the conventions Denmark has signed are obeyed.
4. The Danish **Refugee Appeals Board** must be constituted so as to ensure its independence of the Government. The Board must respect UN recommendations, and the **courts** must be authorised to hear appeals against its verdicts.
5. The **police’s role** in the treatment of applicants for asylum should be confined to registering their identities on entry. An applicant should then be given **impartial guidance** in the Danish asylum procedure, with the assistance of a **qualified interpreter**, who should continue to assist in the same way during the subsequent stages of the asylum process.
6. If processing of the asylum seeker’s application has not been completed within **18 months from the date of entry**, then the applicant should automatically be granted a residence permit. If an asylum seeker whose application has been rejected cannot be deported to the country from which he or she has fled within 18 months after the date of rejection, they should **automatically be granted a residence permit**. The deadline for processing each and every phase of the application shall be individually enforceable.
7. After a **maximum of six months** in a refugee centre, every asylum seeker must be granted the **rights to move out into society**, to take paid work, and to enrol in a course of education. Everyone in this situation must be covered by **public health insurance** and the provisions in the law on **social services**. **Children must be guaranteed access to normal school** classes and education immediately after their arrival.
8. Neither asylum seekers nor those whose applications have been rejected shall be subject to administrative **detention nor imprisonment without trial**.
9. The fixed procedure for processing asylum applications should include an invitation to every applicant to be optionally screened by medical personnel for the **effects of torture**. Victims of torture should immediately be offered medical treatment. Impairment in an applicant’s ability to function normally as a consequence of **posttraumatic stress disorder** should be recognised as a humanitarian basis for issuing a residence permit. The Ministry of Justice should be obliged to submit to **independent medical guidance** when determining residence applications based on humanitarian considerations.
10. Asylum seekers who have **fled from war zones** and similar circumstances – including zones where civil war is being waged – should be awarded **interim residence permits** in consultation with UNHCR. If the fighting hasn’t stopped after 3 years, then **permanent residence** should be granted.



## “Danish Grandparents” demand: Humanity

- **Asylum seekers can wait for years** without any right to education, nor to work, and without hope. Many of them get **rejected**, because they are perceived as unconvincing. More than **150 persons** have spent **over 8 years** in Danish refugee centres. They should be granted **amnesty and residence permits NOW!**
- **Innocent children** are suffering childhood with their traumatised parents in refugee camps, deprived of the opportunity for development. Far too many refugee children contract **lifelong psychiatric disorders**.



We know this is going on – we have heard them tell their stories – we have wept with them – Sometimes we’ve managed to get speedier processing for their applications, which are often improperly and unreasonably delayed.

## “Danish Grandparents” demand: Stop this cynicism

Refugees are **law-abiding, vulnerable people in danger and distress**. They are innocent victims of war, persecution, abuse, **even torture**, in their own country. They need **protection and special consideration**. Refugees must **not** be subjected to the **obligations** that Denmark **imposes on immigrants**.

There are women in refugee centres who apply for asylum on the basis of e.g. **gender-related violence, rape or sexual violence in war zones, genital mutilation, forced marriage, acid attacks, or human trafficking**.

- The **ruthlessly inflexible** asylum rules are misused to warn off other refugees. This has harsh consequences for innocent refugee children.
- **Families get split up**, and well assimilated children receive **compulsory deportation orders** – only to be reprieved, in a few lucky instances, after determined lobbying by good-hearted friends and classmates.

Is this cynicism what the people of Denmark really want?



Marwa og Madu

foto: Erik Hansen

**There are children who must flee,  
but you have nothing to fear.**

**No one is going to treat you badly – I hope.**

(from “Childhood’s Country” by Danish songwriter Benny Andersen)