



CHILDREN AND THE REFUGEE CRISIS





HUMAN RIGHTS WEEK 2016

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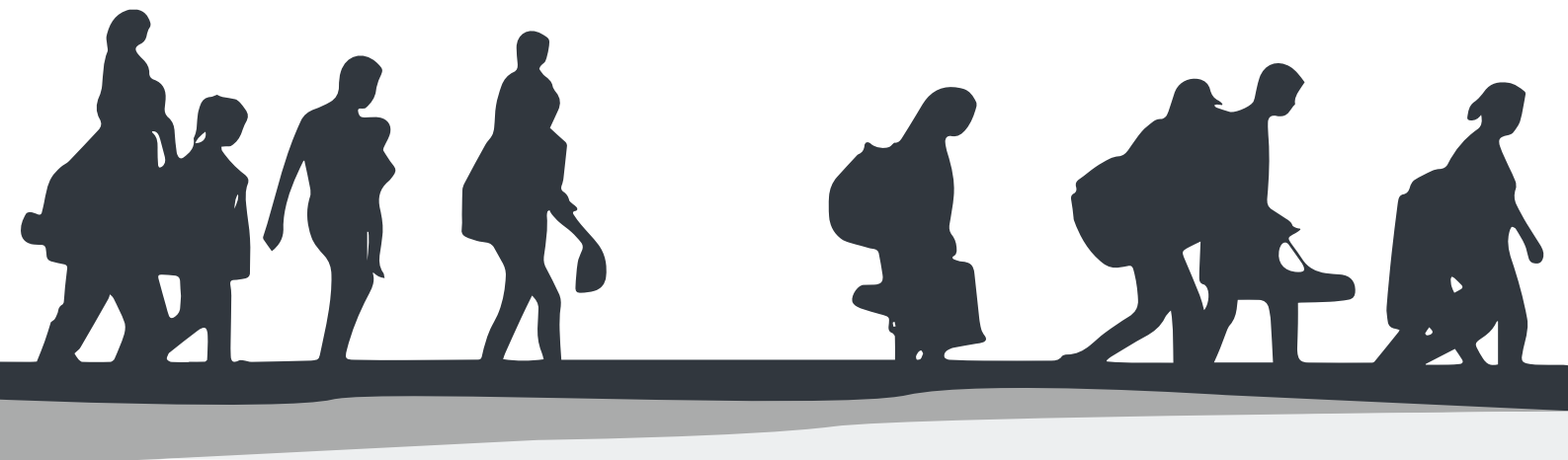
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HUMAN RIGHTS WEEK 2016

Each year on 10 December, we celebrate the anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which recognises that every human being has certain rights. No matter what race, culture or country we come from, whether young or old, rich or poor, human rights are for ALL.

This year, the HRE programme is celebrating Human Rights Week (1 Dec - 10 Dec) to raise awareness and take action on human rights violations that affect a lot of people across the world. The theme for this year is **CHILDREN AND THE REFUGEE CRISIS**.

This Activity Kit will help you in organising Human Rights Week in your school. It will serve as a guide to introducing the refugee crisis to students, and help facilitate greater understanding of the issue through a number of age-appropriate activities.

This Activity Kit recommends certain timelines and suggested sequences of activities for effective implementation. However, you are free to follow any sequence and end the celebration with an activity to show solidarity and support to refugee children everywhere. The activities are designed for students from grades 4 to 12, to be conducted with the help of the teacher.

THE WORLD'S TOP 10 REFUGEE HOST COUNTRIES



AN INTRODUCTION TO THE REFUGEE CRISIS

The refugee crisis is affecting the lives of millions of people across the world. According to figures released by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), over 65 million people have been forcibly displaced. Of these, 21.3 million are refugees¹, over half of whom are under the age of 18.

Over the last year, several media reports have covered the hostility that refugees have faced in the quest for asylum. The myriad of misconceptions about refugees by many host countries are also concerning – given that this crisis has reached a global scale.

Amnesty is keen to challenge myths and misrepresentations of refugees, and to campaign for the protection and promotion of the human rights of refugees and asylum seekers. We believe that positive educational messages are a crucial tool to counter fear, ignorance and the negative stereotyping of refugees.

For young students in India, the relevance of this global crisis is significant to their lives. It is vital for children to understand the situation of their peers across the world, including in India. The realities faced by refugee children will play a crucial role in shaping the adults they will become. This is of import – because all of these children, together, will be adults in a global world tomorrow.

¹<http://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html>

TIP FOR TEACHERS



SENSITIVITY

Difficult issues: Talking about human rights and refugees can seem complex and not relevant for discussion by primary school children. However, children face the basic issues of fairness, prejudice, conflict-resolution and human choice and action every day through relationships with their peers. The aim of this kit is to develop these concepts and relate them to the issue of the refugee crisis.

Children are often exposed to negative myths around refugees and asylum seekers and may have come into contact with refugee issues directly or through a friend. Through open discussion and structured activities, children can explore these issues in the safety of the classroom environment and help them embrace the principles of human rights i.e. respect, dignity, non-discrimination, participation and inclusion.

Refugees in the classroom: There may be staff or pupils at school who are refugees and the topic needs to be approached in a way that safeguards their wellbeing and self-esteem. It may be difficult for a refugee to talk about traumatic experiences; they may have fears about returning home or being seen as 'different'. While personal experiences can enrich debate, teachers should be aware of the difficult emotions colleagues and pupils might face in such situations.

SUGGESTED SEQUENCING OF ACTIVITIES FOR HUMAN RIGHTS WEEK CELEBRATIONS

Date	Activities	Duration	Classes
5 th -6 th Dec	1. Introduction to Asylum Seekers and Refugees – Activity 1(A)	60 minutes	Grades 4 - 7 (Classroom Activity)
	2. Introduction to Asylum Seekers and Refugees – Activity 1(B)	60 minutes	Grades 8 - 12 (Classroom Activity)
	3. Fleeing a Country – Activity 2	60 minutes	Grades 6 - 12 (Classroom Activity)
7 th - 8 th Dec	Raise Your Hands for Refugee Rights! - Activity 3	30 minutes	Grades 4 - 12
9 th Dec	Special Assembly for Human Rights Day with parents and students	60 minutes	Parents, students and teachers

DEFINITIONS

What is a refugee?

A refugee is someone who cannot live in their own country because they are afraid of being persecuted (abused or mistreated) because of their religion, political beliefs or social behaviour or do not feel safe in their own country. When you are given refugee status by another country you are allowed to live in that country, safe from harm.

Many people consider themselves refugees whether or not they have been officially recognised by the government of the country in which they are seeking asylum.

What is an asylum seeker?

An asylum seeker is someone who seeks asylum (safety) in a foreign country and has applied to the government in the hope that they will be given refugee status.

What is an internally displaced person?

An internally displaced person is someone who seeks safety in another part of their country because they are afraid of being persecuted. They do not cross any international borders, so are not considered refugees.



FACTS AND FIGURES

Refugees across the world

2015 was record-breaking in terms of forced displacement. According to UNHCR, in 2015 the number of refugees reached 21.3 million.

Although the increase in refugee numbers is due largely to the conflict in Syria, the refugee crisis is a global phenomenon with large refugee populations in most regions of the world. The Syria conflict was the catalyst for international attention to an issue that has not received the attention it needs.

Some of the major refugee populations globally are

Over **5**
million

**Palestinian
refugees in the Middle East**

Over **4.8**
million

**refugees from Syria – 95% living
in five neighbouring countries**

Over **2.5**
million

**Afghan refugees, the majority
in Pakistan and Iran**

More than **1**
million

**Somali refugees, including 413,000
in neighbouring Kenya**

AN INTRODUCTION TO ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

(For Middle school)

ACTIVITY

1A



TIME REQUIRED

> 60 minutes



MATERIALS

- > Projector and speakers to show video to students
- > Chart paper
- > Stationery



AUDIENCE

- > This activity is intended for use with students from grades 4 – 7. The activity is designed for groups.

“ THIS ACTIVITY AIMS TO BUILD

- An understanding of the realities faced by refugee children.
- Empathy with issues facing asylum seekers and refugees.
- Understanding of some of the causes of refugee movements.
- An introduction to human rights and the right to seek asylum in particular.

”

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

1 Start the session with the videos on refugees to introduce the crisis and the problems faced by refugees around the world with special focus on refugee children.

Please note that you will need a good Internet connection for this, as these videos can only be streamed from the site. These videos will only be available until May 2017.



AN INTRODUCTION TO ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

ACTIVITY

1A

VIDEO 1: RACHEL'S JOURNEY FROM A COUNTRY IN EURASIA (5.10 MINS)

An animated documentary, featuring 17-year-old Rachel who escaped her country of origin having suffered years of persecution because of her religion. After settling in to life in the UK and enjoying her first experience of a normal childhood, she was suddenly sent to a detention centre and then deported back to her country.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00vdxp0>

VIDEO 2: TWO SEEKING REFUGEE (4.19 MINS)

An animated documentary exploring why 10-year-old Hamid from Eritrea had to flee his country and how he has found adjusting to life in the UK. Having had to leave behind his father, who was later killed, Hamid describes the struggles of coming to terms with his father's death, as well as settling in to a new country.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00vdxrk>

VIDEO 3: ALI'S JOURNEY FROM AFGHANISTAN (3.25 MINS)

The award-winning Seeking Refuge series is composed of short animated documentaries, each focusing on the plight of refugee children and their adaptation to a new country. Told in the words of a 10 year-old, Ali's story focuses on the case of a young boy separated from his family after he escapes war.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00vc149>



AN INTRODUCTION TO ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

ACTIVITY

1A

2 Ask the students for their first reactions to the film. Emphasise the pre-agreed ground rules of a safe space for discussion. You might want to ask questions such as:

- What did the children say about their lives in the film?
- How would you feel if you were in Ali, Rachel or Hamid's place?
- Can you spot the countries these children had come from on a map?

3 Initiate the following classroom activity:

- Ask the students to help you write out events from a typical day in their lives – e.g. eat breakfast, go to school, play time, etc. Call for suggestions from the class, and put these up on the board. Encourage as many entries to give a sense of what the students enjoy or are a part of their routine.
- Now ask the students to consider how many of these activities they would not be able to do, if they were forced to flee their homes. You can help them make a list of these. The point of the exercise is to help students understand how many of the activities and comforts of daily life are denied to refugee children.



AN INTRODUCTION TO ASYLUM SEEKERS AND REFUGEES

(For High school)

ACTIVITY

1B



TIME REQUIRED

> 45 minutes



MATERIALS

> Computer with a strong Internet connection

> Projector and speakers



AUDIENCE

> This activity is intended for use with students from grades 8 - 12. The activity is designed for a group, but can be completed by students on their own.

“ THIS ACTIVITY AIMS TO BUILD

- An understanding of the realities faced by refugees.
- Empathy with issues facing asylum seekers and refugees.
- Understanding of some of the causes of refugee movements.
- An introduction to human rights and the right to seek asylum in particular.

”

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

1 Take the class through the journey of a refugee on this interactive website:

<http://twobillionmiles.com> This website is an excellent resource to help older students see the realities many refugees face. It is designed so that no two journeys are ever the same, leaving the choice of how the journey progresses up to the viewer. Please note that sometimes the journeys do not end – and that is often the point of the story.

Once you have taken the class through a journey, initiate a class discussion on what they have just experienced. Try and bring the discussion around to a human rights perspective, but remember to be sensitive to the students' feelings, who may find the session quite intense.

FLEEING A COUNTRY

ACTIVITY

2



TIME REQUIRED

> 60 minutes



MATERIALS

> Chart paper

> Stationery



AUDIENCE

> The activity is intended for use with students from grades 6 - 12. The activity is designed for a group but can also be adapted to work for individual students to do on their own.

“ THIS ACTIVITY AIMS TO BUILD

- Empathy for the realities that refugee children face.
- An understanding of the difference between needs and wants.

”

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

1 Divide the class into groups of 5 or 6 students. Give each group a category from the list below. Indicate that for the purpose of this activity, they will be thinking and making decisions as a unit. If required, you can also come up with your own composition of groups.

a) A family of four – Both parents and two children aged 4 and 9

b) A single man

c) A family of six – Both parents, two children aged 8 and 11, two grandparents aged 67

d) A single mother with an eight month old baby

e) A brother and sister, aged 23 and 16

f) A family of five – both parents, two children aged 1 and 3, a grandparent aged 59

g) Three single women travelling together, aged between 25 and 40



FLEEING A COUNTRY

ACTIVITY

2

2 Give each group some chart paper and stationery. Ask them to label their charts according to their category. Give each group the following scenario:

“You/Your family have to leave your country immediately. There is no time to say goodbye to your friends or extended family. You’ve just heard that the police are coming to arrest you or your family. You are not sure where you are going, and you do not know how long it will take you to get there. You have 5 minutes to pack 30 items. What would you take?”

3 After the five minutes are over, ask the teams to settle down and give them the following scenario:

“You/Your family have managed to get away from the authorities without being apprehended. You have reached a border town, where a smuggler has agreed to take you across the border to the neighbouring country. But there is not enough space. You have to leave behind ten items. You have 7 minutes to decide.”

4 After 7 minutes, ask the teams to share with the class the items that they have decided to leave behind and why. Ask them how they felt doing the exercise. Was it difficult? Why?



FLEEING A COUNTRY

ACTIVITY

2

5 Now give the teams the following scenario:

“You’ve crossed the border to the next country, but the smugglers can take you no further. You/Your family have to walk for 200 kilometers over treacherous terrain to get to a coastal village. You/ Your family can only survive the trip if you follow these rules:

- Adults and teens over 13 can carry only three items each
- Children between the ages of 5 and 13 can carry two items
- Children under 5 cannot carry anything
- Grandparents above 55 can carry one item

You have 10 minutes to decide how many items you can carry and which ones you will leave behind”

6 At the end of 10 minutes, ask the groups to share how many items they could carry and what they chose to leave behind. Ask the team to analyse how the composition of their group (and therefore the ability to carry things) will affect their ability to survive for the journey ahead. The idea is to help them understand the disparity within difficult situations. E.g. a single mother with a baby can only carry four items.



FLEEING A COUNTRY

ACTIVITY

2

7 The next scenario is as follows:

“You/Your family have made it through to the coastal town! There is a boat that can take you to a safe country, but it is so crowded that people are fighting to get on. You/Your family can take a maximum of 5 items with you. If you have less than 5 items left from the last round, you can only take those with you – nothing more. The boat leaves in 2 minutes. What do you take?”

8 Once this final activity is complete, ask the students how they felt. How did they make the decisions they did. Was it difficult? Ask them to look at their original list of 30 items. Can they differentiate between a “Need” and a “Want”? Discuss further.



FLEEING A COUNTRY

ACTIVITY

2

Some key items that should be on lists. Share these with the groups after the activity to help them understand how dire the situation is on the ground.

Money	Passport	Identity document	Spare Clothes
Shoes	Medicine	Toothbrush	Phone
Charger	Bag/backpack	Sanitary napkins	Books
Certificates	Debit card	Bank Account	Flashlight
First aid kit	Food	Baby diapers	Water
Blanket	Paper to write	Gold	Jackets
Sleeping bag	Jewellery	Pictures of my family	Family heirlooms
Plastic pouch to keep documents safe	Tent	Baby food and milk powder	Soap



RAISE YOUR HAND FOR REFUGEE RIGHTS!

ACTIVITY

3



TIME REQUIRED

> 30 minutes



MATERIALS

- > Chart paper in various colours
- > Sketch pens, crayons and other decorative craft materials
- > Long wooden sticks like individual broom sticks or long toothpicks
- > Glue



AUDIENCE

- > This activity is intended for use with students from grade 4 - 12. The activity is designed for individual students and can be completed by students on their own.

“ THIS ACTIVITY AIMS TO BUILD

Help students take action to show their support for refugees. ”



RAISE YOUR HAND FOR REFUGEE RIGHTS!

ACTIVITY

3

ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

- 1** Distribute the chart papers among all the students. You can also cut the chart papers in half to reduce wastage. Also distribute sketch pens or crayons, and the other decorative craft materials.
- 2** Ask the children to lay one of their arms – from elbow to fingertips – flat on the chart paper. Using their other hand, trace the outline of their arm on the chart paper.
- 3** Invite the children to write a one-line message in support of refugee protection and refugee rights on their “arm”, along with their name and class. They can then decorate their “arm” as they like.
- 4** Once they have finished decorating their individual “arms”, ask them to glue the broom sticks to the back so that the “arm” will be upright.
- 5** These “arms” can then be displayed as a sign of support of refugee rights in your school. You could organise an area where all students participating can add their Hands of Support. This could be a sand pit created indoors, or pots with mud into which the children could stick their Hands of Support. Don't forget to send in a picture of the students and their displays.
- 6** While the Hands of Support are being added to the display area, it would be nice if a moment of silence could be observed for all the refugee children who have died while trying to get to safety.



BEYOND HUMAN RIGHTS WEEK 2016

A key aspect of the Human Rights Week celebrations every year is to involve community members in the celebrations. We encourage you to think of creative and innovative ways in which the school community can be involved, even after Human Rights Day. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- 1** Display the “Hands of Support” in a prominent area as a reminder of the action taken by students
- 2** Organise interclass debates on the issue of asylum seekers, refugees and forced migration
- 3** Organise a ‘Special Assembly’ for parents and students on 10th December, which is Human Rights Day. You can ask each family to sit together, and then conduct an adapted version of Activity #2 with them.

Don't forget to send us pictures of your activities!



JOIN US!

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